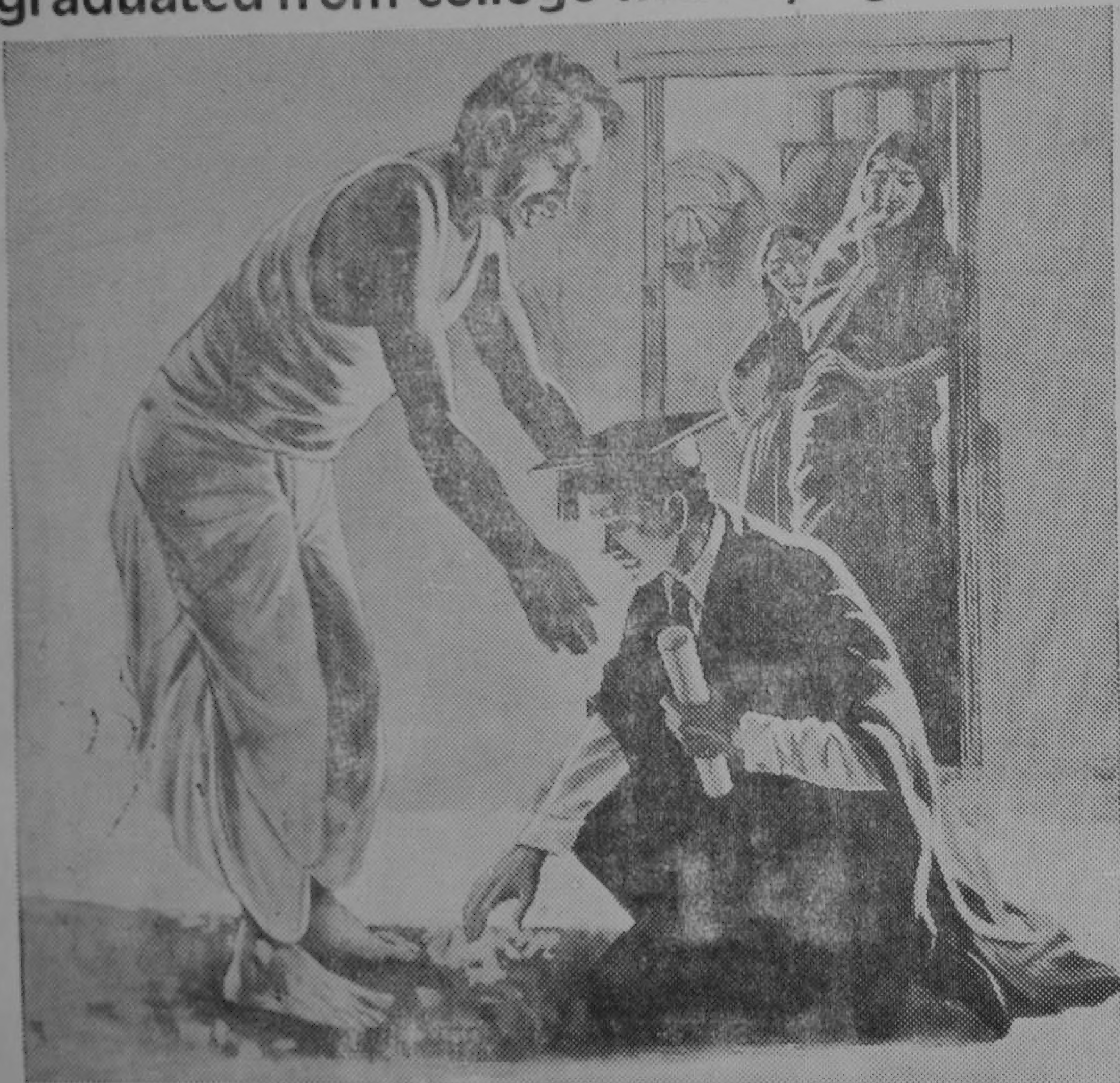
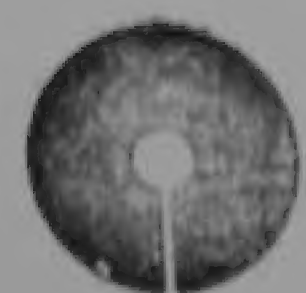


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Soul Searching in Classical Hindustani Music

By

SAKUNTALA NARASIMHAN, ASST. EDITOR "FEMINA"

One of the most common reactions of lay listeners asked to compare contemporary Carnatic and Hindustani music is that the former is dominated by words (sahitya) while the latter is characterised by sparseness of lyrics.

To a certain extent, this contention is valid. Carnatic music concerts are taken up mostly by compositions like kritis, javalis etc. which, compared to the *khayal* (the mainstay of the north Indian concert) has more words, set more or less rigidly to a pattern of rhythm.

In contrast, the *khayal* as it is sung today has a very loosely knit, pliable line of lyrics that individual performers mould or stretch according to their fancy. While instrumentalists in the Carnatic tradition play the same kriti and other compositions as vocalists, north India instrumentalists mostly take up 'gats' which are just musical notes or tunes set to tala, without any corresponding words.

Taking Liberties with old Forms

Over the last 50-70 years, this trend has perhaps intensified, with the passing into near oblivion of the traditional Dhrupad form (along with other forms like Chaturanga, Thiruvat etc.) and the increasing trend even among khayal singers to offer truncated 'cheezas' (com-

positions) and taking liberties with this abridged composition also (a khayal singer can and often does get away with not singing the 'antara' or the second half of the sahitya, whereas no kriti can be similarly left half-sung without inviting instant ridicule and the wrath of listeners.)

As in all Indian arts, the warp in our fabric of classical music has always been that of devotion. (Even when lyrics describe the yearnings of a woman for her beloved, the deeper mystical interpretation has always been that of the atma or soul yearning for union with the paramatma or godhead). And devotion mostly rides on the vehicle of words (sahitya).

Which meant that when instrumental music began to take precedence on the concert platform (for various reasons—one is that instrumental sounds were easier to enjoy for those who did not understand the language of the lyrics and therefore afforded greater chances of rapport between performer and audience; another reason was that with modern lifestyles shying away from the rigours of long, extended training that earlier generations went through, it became inevitable that voice culture along with other training for melodic delivery would become a casualty of fast-paced living. Instrumental sounds, therefore, offer greater attractions compared to vocal performances) this

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ultimate goal of music (of being offered as devotion to the Lord) found itself at the crossroads.

Well, not quite perhaps; for pure aesthetics (*rasanubhooti*) as an emotional experience unconnected to the word content of a piece of music has always been recognised and accepted among the norms of our musical systems. If an *alap* elaboration using only note combinations without any *sahitya* could offer aesthetic pleasure, then *sahitya* could be regarded as not indispensable.

Once this premise was granted, there inevitably arose considerable scope for interpreting it in such a manner that words could be considered unimportant, or at best of minimal importance, in the scheme of aesthetic priorities.

Besides, when new ragas were borrowed from the Carnatic system, it became necessary to create lyrics for the new melodies (when performed as *khayals* by vocalists) and, in the absence of dedicated *vaggeyakkaras* well-versed in the rules governing the frame work of a composition (prosody, rhyme, musical and rhythmical accents, for example) vocalists themselves rigged out some kind of basic framework on which to build their elaborations. 'Compositions', in such cases, became mere formalities, to be gone through quickly or cursorily, with the spotlight on the edifice erected on this 'composition' rather than the beauties inherent in the composition itself. ("This amounts to saying," comments one *vidwan*, that the milk with which I am making the pudding is weak, therefore

my dispensing with milk altogether will mean no loss in taste"—the proper attitude should be, "if the milk is weak, I must get better quality so that my pudding is as enjoyable as it ought to be ...")

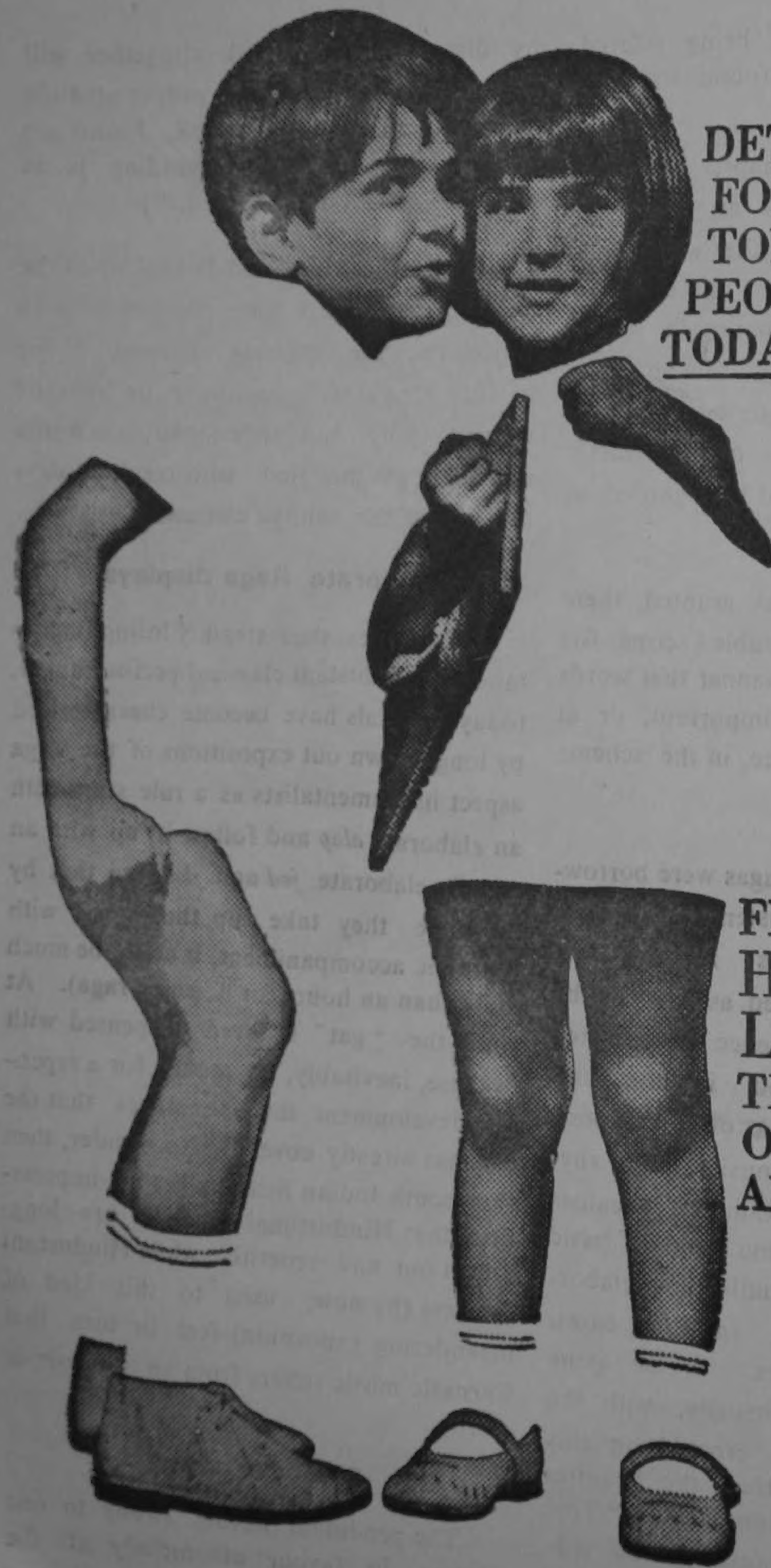
One opinion also holds that when the Muslim performers sang compositions in *Brijbhasha* (the language of most of our extant *khayal* compositions) or Sanskrit which they did not understand, the words inevitably got mangled, with resultant devaluation of the *sahitya* element.

Elaborate Raga displays

With lyrics thus steadily losing importance in Hindustani classical performances, today's recitals have become characterised by long-drawn out expositions of the *raga* aspect instrumentalists as a rule start with an elaborate *alap* and follow it up with an equally elaborate *jod* and *jhala*, so that by the time they take up the 'gat' with rhythmic accompaniment, it could be much more than an hour (for a single *raga*). At times the 'gat' is even dispensed with because, inevitably, it makes for a repetitive development through stages that the *alap* has already covered. No wonder, then that south Indian listeners get the impression that Hindusthani recitals are long-drawn out and repetitive while Hindustani listeners (by now, used to this kind of meandering exposition) feel in turn that Carnatic music suffers from an overdose of words.

Soul Searching

The pendulum, having swung to one extreme, in favour of melody at the expense of *sahitya*, has inevitably to start



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swinging back in the other direction. And as a prelude to that, some soul-searching seems to have begun. In a recent interview, sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan has said that it is necessary to curtail the long, meandering expositions of *alap* in Hindustani music (instrumental recitals) and give greater importance to the *bandish* (composition) "because compositions bring out the beauty of raga equally well - it is possible to do a satisfactory *alap* within 15 minutes...."

As scholar musician Vamanrao Deshpande has said in his book on musical traditions, "The *cheez* itself, if sung properly, outlines the particular combination of notes which make up the raga, indicate their relative importance in the raga theme, shows which notes will be highlighted and which not, which notes will produce directly and which only obliquely, indicates the notes on which the singer will dwell longer and others on which he will pause only briefly... in other words, in the *sthayi* the singer presents the outline of the raga and maps out its domain; it serves to establish the general framework of the melody within which its detailed structure will be subsequently built up."

In a break-away move, he has even been known to begin recitals (e.g., his national programme recital a few months ago with short, *drut* compositions instead of the prevailing common sequence of 'ativilambit' (*alap*), *jod*, *jhala* and *vilambit* 'gat' before going on to *drut*.

'Bring back the bandish' is the thrust of his theory. Is this an individual opinion,

or a feeling shared by other performers in Hindustani music too?

Diverse opinions

"True, compositions are end-products of years of melodic viability tests," agreed some of the veterans I spoke to. "They are not spur-of-the-moment concoctions; the 'prayogas' are technically meant as lexicons of melodic grammar, distilling in their framework the essence of the raga".

Seen from this angle, the composition (*bandish*) becomes not just a vehicle or peg for individual extemporisation, but a polished and carefully thought-out edifice capturing in its framework the essential elements of the raga. Kritis are performed thus, as musical works with beauties of their own, irrespective of the scope afforded for free play of imaginative development. (Apart from this, there is, also, the beauty of the meanings of the *sahitya*, which can be an additional element in aesthetic enjoyment). At the moment, the *khayal* suffers on this count, being used almost exclusively as a peg on which to hang one's imaginative prowess. Further enrichment is possible by restoring the composition to a place of greater importance than it has at present.

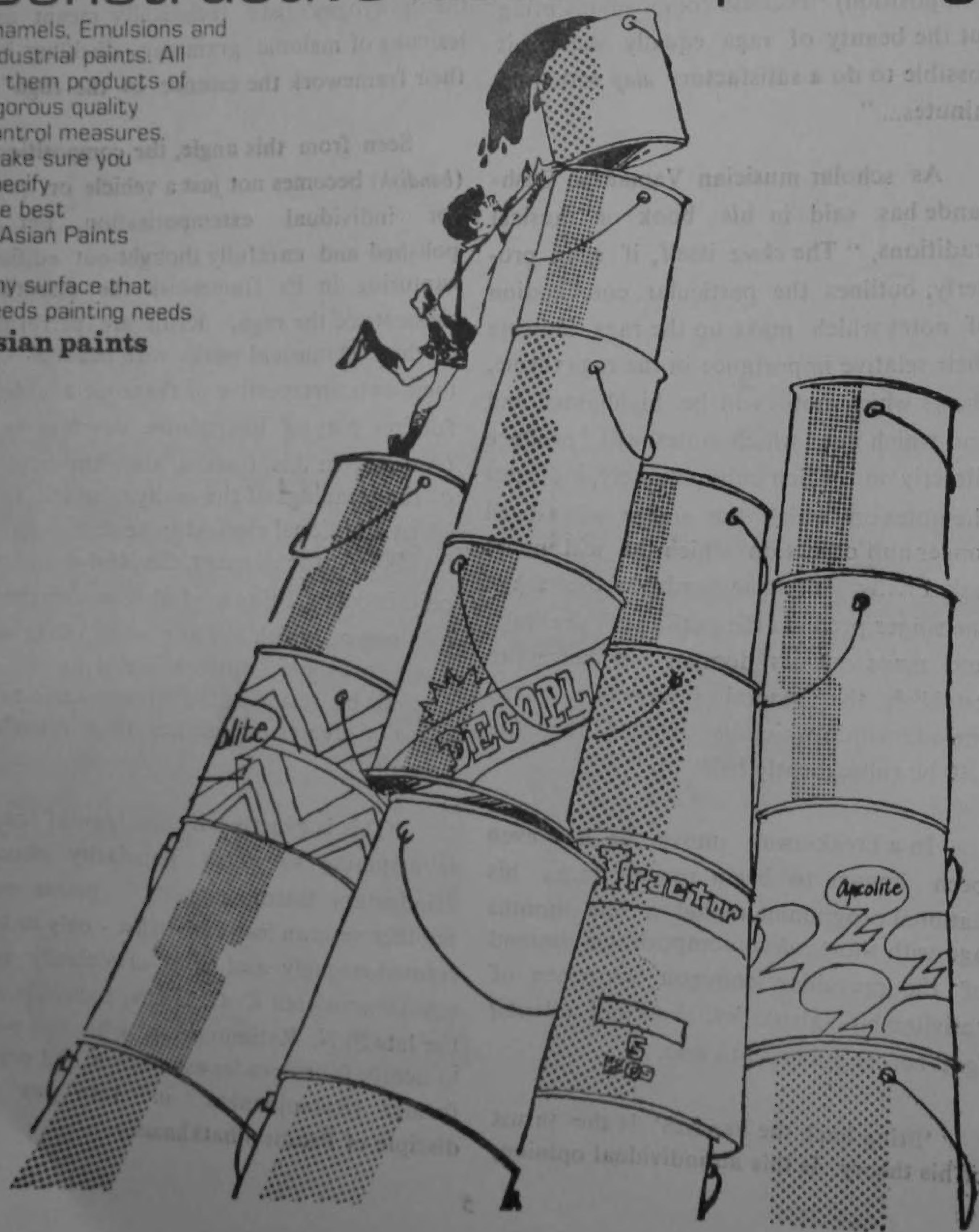
"This is exactly why the 'gayaki' 'ang' is assuming so much popularity among Hindustani instrumentalists," points out another veteran instrumentalist - only to be refuted strongly and most articulately by scholar-musician K. G. Ginde, a disciple of the late S. N. Ratanjhanekar, who has put in nearly four decades as teacher and performer (Ratanjhanekar in turn was a disciple of Pandit Bhatkhande).

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The lure of Alap

Recalling that the sarod maestro (who is advocating the elevation of compositions to eminence on the Hindustani platform) had once begun a concert with a performance of 'Raghupati rajaram', Prof. Ginde points out that he can recall instances, when audiences sat through two-hour vocal recitals of only *alap* (in a single raga) and relished it. "As long as there is something aesthetically worth while and the ideas are varied enough to avoid repetition, *alap* can be done in depth without imposing time limitations," he says. Training in *dhrupad* singing gave one the capacity to sing elaborate *alaps* whereas today this aspect is neglected.

Duels

Compositions, particularly for instrumentalists, take on an attraction not because of the intrinsic values of melodic grammar or aesthetics in them but because of the scope that the rhythm-based tune gives the performer for 'duels' of showmanship with the percussionist. "Take away the percussionist and make an honest assessment of how much melodic content is left in today's typical recital - and you will understand the depths our music has sunk to," he says, reiterating that making a conscious effort to win a mass following for a basically classical, elitist art that cannot, by definition, have mass appeal, is bound to reflect on standard - which is what is happening. "The boredom is not because of long-drawn *alaps* or the absence of *bandish*, it is caused by plain bankruptcy of musical ideas and of imagination...absence of the rhythm element (in *alap*) makes for repetition and rambling expositions only

if one needs rhythm as a crutch to lean on; rhythm is not something to 'fight' with, but to 'play' with; and once this is lost sight of (as in the faster, rhythm based portions of a Hindustani concert, or during involved swara singing in Carnatic music) there is bound to be trouble of all sorts...."

In the South, too

Which brings to mind a similar controversy in South Indian music too some years ago, when a Vina vidwan cut a long playing discontaining only raga alapanas, without any kritis or other compositions, and without any rhythm, to make the point that even such a rhythm-free exposition can be enjoyed as good music. The point is: are those swearing by long alapanas and those others who are for importance to be given to lyrics and compositions, both referring to the same goals, or talking about the same thing? If it is just musical 'ananda' (rasānubhooti) or aesthetic enjoyment *per se* that is sought, alapana can hold its own as well as any other aspect of classical music. If it is the totality of musical experience that one is referring to, its nurturance, safeguarding and promotion on a wider plane over a period of time, relegating sahitya to secondary importance, will mean a definite loss and deprivation.

This holds true of both south and north Indian music - to quote Balamurali's viewpoint, "Sahitya is a medium, the vehicle of our music - and music will die without careful attention to this aspect... the *khaya* happens to be a type of composition that does not depend on sahitya,

but Carnatic music too has such compositions (like the pallavi..."

To talk in terms of raga (alapana) and compositions as if the two were mutually exclusive would be to treat only a partial aspect of the whole scene. Do we need compositions (in Hindustani music)? Yes of course - they enrich the system and add to the body of aesthetic heritage passed on from generation to generation. But can we have a (particular) recital accentuating only the alap aspect with little (or very little) emphasis on compositions, and still make a success of it? Yes, again - but then one concert (or even a few) does not a heritage make, just as one swallow (or koyal) however welcome or pleasant does not make a summer.

"Words have, on the one hand, a literary quality and on the other, a musical quality. In language its function is to communicate meaning, in music it is to help swara attain a higher kind of meaning and significance..." (Vamanrao Deshpande)... the word in a musical composition is subservient to its music... in this process it adapts itself to what the music wants to get out of it..."

Basic Norms

In the final analysis the problem is one of basic discipline - certain norms have been drawn up over decades of trials and those have survived the test of time. While innovation is fine (provided it is based on rational thinking and a genuine need for change), gimmick-mongering in the name of innovation can only be construed as lack of discipline or the absence of respect for procedures involved and accepted as proper over time.

Today, personality projections and charisma take precedence over traditional competence or discipline; and once the glamour of popular following has been established, it is sometimes treated as a licence to play around at will with procedures, grammar and sequences because one can get away with it. Personality-bound vocalism (or instrumental competence) often does take precedence over scientific correctness (readers can think up their own examples!) and this holds good not just in the limited context of Hindustani music and the place of compositions in it, but for music in general.

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Music & Modern Times*

BY

K. V. SASTRY

A Presidential address is a necessary ritual in any conference. 13 men of music have performed this duty from this seat before. The previous Presidents have dealt in detail with the Puranic and historic background, the spiritual values, the abiding religiosity, the abiding qualities and powers of music and so on. I do not want to repeat the same thoughts. I prefer to leave the Gods, Gandharvas and Apsaras to themselves in their own world and shall confine my speech to music on this earth. Even there, I wish to concentrate mostly on its relation with society, its current state and problems etc.

We revere the great tradition of our music and divine origins and also are proud about it. We believe that it has come down in the same form from thousands of years. Against this background let us, for instance, imagine that if a musician of the previous ages - that is a musician of the 17-18th century - came to life and takes a look around today, what could be his reaction?

The Changed Situation

First of all, he is struck by the silence at homes due to the absence of sounds that were familiar in his days. He misses the melodious sounds of songs that were a part of the daily worship, the festivals and other social functions. The women and

children who sang with enthusiasm and rich voices the songs and verses suitable to the occasions, are now dumb. Even the men cannot recite verses musically. The girls at homes do not even know how to sing. But he also hears some strange songs there, which come out of some machines and which are beyond his comprehension.

Coming out of this home, he feels the absence of the melodious sounds of the musical instruments in the temples. Instead he is greeted by some strange music in shops and public places. Bewildered, he goes in search of a place where he could listen to good music. When he arrives at the building to which he was directed, he is not allowed in. He has to pay some money, receive a piece of paper and get in. He is again confused whether this is a shop or a congregation of musicians and music lovers. It is a strange experience for him.

A totally new set-up

Entering into the building, he finds a stage at one end. The musicians are seated on it. He feels that the music emanating from that platform is not as virile and rich as in his times. He finds a change in its form and it tastes different too. He also notices the undue importance to the supporting instrumentalists. But all of

* Extracts from the Presidential address of Shri B. V. K. Sastry at the 14th Music Conference of the Bangalore Gayana Samaja held in 1982.

them seem restless and in a hurry. He misses the serenity. The audience in the hall is also ten to twentyfold more than what he could find in his times, but behaving differently. The discipline and concentration of his times is absent. Freely whispering and conversing with each other, they suddenly get up and go out, all of which were considered a breach of etiquette during his times. And then there is some sort of missile shaped contraption in front of the leading musician... and so on. He is completely bewildered by the situation. He grieves at the passing away of our glorious music tradition. But then, what about us now? We feel that all these happenings are in accordance with tradition.

Change in Values

There is a reason for this peculiar situation. The forms that prevail in Indian music currently were evolved about 300 years ago, in a different environment and in a different atmosphere. They were born under the shade of religion, and nourished by temples, palaces and the spiritual atmosphere at homes. Music developed as a part of the life of the people bound by its morals, ethics and also the codes of living, reflecting the mind and mood of those times. When the atmosphere changed and the values and taboos of the age disintegrated, it was inevitable that they influenced music too.

Living in the past

Thus an art which evolved in the 17-18th century has to face now the conditions of the 20th century and satisfy its needs. It has to face the changed moods and problems of the century. The persons who should understand these problems and give

a new look and direction to the art, that is, the musicians themselves, are at a loss to understand all this and unable to provide any solutions. This is because though they are physically present in the 20th century, mentally (that is, as it applies to music) they live still in the 13th century. As a consequence we find an uncertainty and a dissatisfaction in the art world now.

Art, a part of temporal life

The most important change effected in life by the machine age is the premium on time. It has become a precious commodity and has guided and limited our activities. Music, too, cannot escape from this effect. As a consequence all its activities concerning learning, singing and listening have been restricted by this time factor. And the forms and qualities too are changing. *Art, instead of being a part of our spiritual life has become a part of the temporal life.* The ancient tenets of Nadanusandhana or Atmasakshara or self-realisation through music etc. have become meaningless now.

Music has become just a medium of entertainment. And it is easily available too. Due to the social changes, the section of the society which patronised the art has disappeared. And the section that has now undertaken that responsibility is different. We find a wide disparity in their tastes and attitudes towards the art. And musicians are also having new experiences. They are being exposed to new musical forms. And it is inevitable that it indirectly has an impact on one's mind.

New Thinking

These things apart, we are now in an independent age. People feel different and

think independently. Breaking through the time-honoured disciplines and customs, the mind is functioning independently. Older order and things are despised while there is a keen desire to do something new. Music is floating on these turbulent waves. In fact, one is left wondering whether there is anything at all in common between the traditional music and the present mood and atmosphere.

Wheel of change

Whether one likes it or not, it is an accepted fact that music is caught up in the wheel of change. Both the art and its exponents are subjected to these changes. Music has to develop and be developed in tune with the changed conditions. For instance, let us take the training in music. The first question that occurs is whether it should strictly adhere to the ancient Gurukula system. No doubt the system had its own positive qualities. But it does not suit the present conditions. It is inevitable that it should be imparted through exclusive schools or colleges following prescribed curricula. But the question is whether the method of training should follow the time-honoured curriculum or whether any changes are necessary, taking the changed circumstances into account. This course of training should be in tune with the changed circumstances, of course without scrapping the basic values of music.

The Microphone

We can just give an example. There were no microphones during the days of the Gurukula. But they have arrived and have become an indispensable part of our music concerts. True, by the advent of

the microphone, some of the old values of the art have disintegrated. But we must also acknowledge the fact that the microphone has permanently settled in the music world. Neither musicians nor the audiences are prepared to dispense with it. In these circumstances, should we not think of ways and means as how to make the best use of this implement instead of merely condemning its role? Is it not better to include the microphone, its mechanism and function etc too in the course of studies, so that the earnest musician in the making grasps its potentialities and thus avails himself of the knowledge for enhancing the music appeal of his performance?

Radio, T. V. etc.

Similarly, we may mention Radio broadcasting music. It requires a different approach. The limited time factor and the invisible lay listeners should be taken into account. And guidance is necessary to formulate a programme that is more for entertainment than edification of these masses.

Both an Art & Science

Further, the innumerable changes that have occurred as a part of the scientific age should also be brought into the ambit of these courses. Music should be learnt more as an art than as a spiritual exercise or experience. The training should lead to independent thought, experiment and creativity and the mind should be prepared for it. It should be impressed that Music does not mean what is confined to the four corners of a concert stage and that the art is flourishing beyond these confines and in the various spheres of life. One should be informed about the different facets

of the art and should also be made to understand that music is not only an art but also a science. The musician should be able to make the best use of the facilities and materials provided by the machine age to enrich and develop the art. He should try to give a new turn and new lustre to the art. It is sad that even our Universities deemed as the centres of shaping our mind and culture have not given any thought to this aspect.

Music is no doubt a performing art. And it requires a responsive audience of art lovers too. The musician feels that his efforts are fruitful if he presents the art before the audience and earns their appreciation. The artists and audience relationship is close, and is like the two sides of a coin. Now we see a phenomenal increase in the number of people who attend concerts. And we all also discern a change in their attitude and tastes. Music is no longer a rare and exclusive product and rare commodity. Music of different varieties and of all artistes is available. We can listen to it through the medium of machines till we are tired.

A New Generation

Thus, a new generation of music enthusiasts who have developed new tastes and a mind desiring such music has grown up. To satisfy their hunger, a musician should have a wide knowledge of the art and also should be creative in his work. His degree of accomplishment should be such that he should provide not only entertainment but also edification and raise the levels of their tastes.

The Golden Cage

Coming to the question of patronage: whenever we refer to this subject it has

become the fashion to recall the patronage extended by the former kings and nobles and other elite. No doubt, there is some truth in it. But we must also remember that the beneficiaries of such patronage were few in number. And we always remember only those few celebrities confined to that golden cage. But music developed not merely by the patronage of Royal courts or the efforts those few patronised there. More than this, it developed due to patronage extended by common people through institutions like temples or many festivals and through functions both religious and social. These created the fertile soil for the growth of music and helped in its development.

Stratification

On the other hand, while the patronage extended by the Royal courts had its good points, sometimes I wonder whether it had some negative aspects too. Some of the best musicians were impounded at one spot and classical music became confined only to the upper crust of the society. Gradually, a gap developed between the common people and classical music. In this context, we must remember that many of the celebrated musicians of old come from rural parts where the art had firm roots. Gradually, classical music became confined to cities and lost contact with people in the rural parts. After the political changes in this country and after Royalty was replaced by peoples' governments, we are finding its consequences in the uncertain conditions.

Responsibility of Musicians & Institutions, Government

If this anomalous situation should change and music should play its important role in society, both the musicians and the public institutions who have now shoulder-

ed the responsibility of promoting the art should work together. They should formulate programmes which help to spread serious music to different sections and layers of society and also to create interest and the development of good tastes in the art. It is not enough if they provide mere entertainment through music.

In this respect, the role of the Government is even greater. It should take a positive lead. This has been done in Soviet Russia and such other countries. Whether Classical or Folk music, the level of development and appreciation is certainly at a high level in those countries. The standards of art and its values will grow in correspondence with the growth of well informed lovers of art with a high level taste for it.

An Unique feature

Now coming to the position of music in Karnataka. Looking at it, our feelings are mixed - both pride and concern. Karnataka is perhaps the only State where both Hindustani and Karnataka systems of music are flourishing side by side and has contributed many musicians of national consequence from both these systems. This is no doubt a matter of pride for us. And the place of Karnataka in the historical perspective of Indian music is of equal importance. But it is a pride which is in the past tense. What about the future? This is a matter of concern, because while boosting our ego, always thinking about a past glory, we have not given sufficient thought about the future. To bring in a new renaissance in music, fully availing the unique position and its inspiration etc. has not occurred to any.

Emotional Integration

It is about 35 years since India became independent and 27 years since the unified

State of Karnataka was formed. Yet there is no communication between the musicians of the different areas of Karnataka. They are still ignorant of the history of music in Karnataka, its stage of developments achievements, tradition and so on. If we have to bring about a new awakening, the first step is the emotional integration of the people of these different areas. We have not achieved it still. In this situation, more than two decades - a decade after Independence and the rest after the formation of Karnataka - were wasted. Without proper guidance and direction, music became stagnant. And the future of a whole generation of upcoming artistes was jeopardised.

Indifference to State Artistes

Discussing Karnataka, I am pained by another feature. It relates to the attitude of the people and their indifference towards their own artistes. Like all the other States in India, there are talented, accomplished artistes in Karnataka too. Many have earned laurels when they visited and performed in other parts of the land. Yet it is amazing that people here are unaware of their presence or accomplishments, let alone giving a thought to encouraging them.

And our musicians are also responsible for this situation to some extent. They still cherish the tendencies or suffer from the prejudices of a bygone age. They must not live in a mental ivory tower but mix with people freely. They should develop contact and earn the peoples goodwill. However preeminent they may be in music, the musicians should also remember that they are a part of the society and not above it. They should strive to achieve the positive things in

music. We must remember that music has never let down people who are devoted to it.

The Silver Lining

Viewed in this light I find a silver lining in the young and upcoming musicians. And it is clearly visible in these ten years. For this change, two institutions are directly and indirectly responsible. They are the Bangalore Gayana Samaja and the Karnataka Ganakala Parishat which was sparked off at the time of the Samaja's first Music Conference. The annual Music Conferences of these two organisations have been responsible for the new awakening. They have created a new enthusiasm and especially stimulated our youth to become more active. We discern an enthusiasm to achieve something in life, and also a pride in them.

Bunch of new Talent

The past decade has produced a good crop of talent. Many young ladies and men have shaped themselves as performing musicians and scholars. Many have distinguished themselves on the national level and have earned laurels even abroad. This has been achieved mainly by hard work and their own enterprise. Our music world had not seen this degree of development in the past. It is a gratifying matter and we should pray that more of such young talent would come up and enrich the music world.

Advice to young Artists

Now a few words to my young musician friends. Music is no doubt an art and also an avocation. But it should not be

viewed mainly from a professional angle. Pursue it as an art. Educate yourselves about its history, values, technique, science etc. On the strength of this learning, think independently. Engage yourself in bold experiments. Through this new stimulus, try to develop new ideas and achieve something new in the art. If your efforts are to become fruitful, you should develop a devotion to and good taste in the art and also a scientific outlook. At the same time, earn the sympathy and goodwill of the people. That is a major support in your life. Through these achievements, earn distinction in your life and also spread the fame of the art tradition of the State. In these efforts of our young men and women to take the art tradition on its forward march, it is necessary they should have the encouragement and support of the people. I request all of you to extend it to them.

Need for Canalising Support Properly

Now about the support extended to music by the people and the Government. Except for the very few well established cultural institutions, the popular encouragement seems to have no definite object or direction. It occurs sporadically and functions waywardly. This situation is sure to improve when popular taste in art also improves. And the cultural institutions should also play a more positive role. Their programmes should not be limited to just entertainment but should also go a step forward so as to inform and build better taste for art in the people. They can also formulate many programmes

leading to sound knowledge that could give a positive direction to music.

Governments' Role

After Independence, the popular governments in all the States are proclaiming that it is the responsibility of the State to give all round encouragement and patronage to art.

But it is a moot point whether this gesture has been of help or harm to the art.

Much of this patronage is being given as a largesse. It should have some definite objects. Government's first responsibility is in respect of propagation. The system of art education needs radical changes and young musicians provided with performing opportunities.

Similarly, the government should collect all objects connected with musical heritage including the effects great artistes have left behind and preserve them. This is a duty they owe to posterity. The patronage extended by the government should help the artistes to lead a life of self-respect and not of a supplicant.

Friends, it has been a long drawn speech. I am in the position of a Vidwan who is caught up in endless swaraprastara by missing the point of "Eduppu". No doubt there is so much still to be said. But it will certainly help the development of art if we practise even an iota of what we speak. My thanks to the Bangalore Gayana Samaja for providing me this opportunity to share my thoughts with you. *Courtesy of Gayan Samaja and Shri B. V. K. Sastry.*

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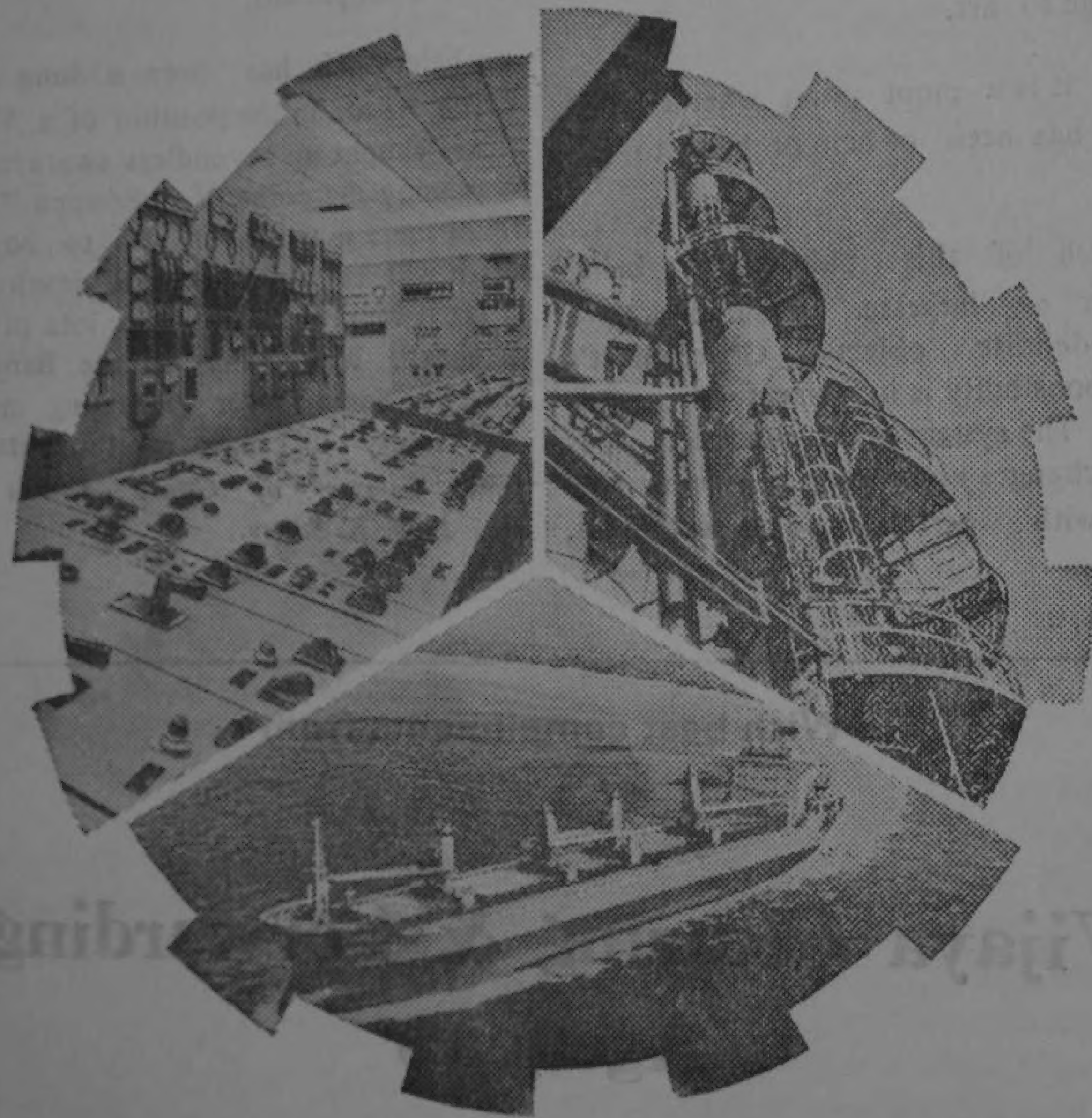
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Auditorium Acoustics for Indian Music

By

Dr. M. Pancholy

All communication sounds, whether articulate speech or music, are affected by the environment and invariably undergo some modifications in tonal quality in their passage from the source to the listener. The extent of modification and the nature of the modification so introduced depend very largely on the acoustics of the environment. In practice, these modifications do not significantly affect speech intelligibility, if three basic requirements are met. These are: firstly, that the sound received by the listener is adequately loud; secondly, that the prevailing background noise is low; and thirdly, that there is no prolonged reverberation or resounding of sound in the room. In listening to music these basic requirements are equally essential but not sufficient to ensure best tonal qualities.

Two Aspects

There are two aspects of listening to music. On the one hand, it is the interpretation of music and appreciation of its technical perfection while on the other hand, it is the aesthetics of the tonal quality of the sound of music as heard by the listener. The listener in this case is not only the audience at any point

in the seating area but also the performer the ensemble, the orchestra or the dancer, all of whom must listen to the music being played in the right perspective.

The Subjective element

The tonal quality of musical sound as sensed by the listener is not necessarily the perfect replica of the original sound. Music sounds are always heard with modifications by the environment and as such we have no subjective experience of listening to these sounds in their unaltered form. Our subjective criteria of the fidelity of sound is based on our experience of listening to that sound in a preferred environment. The acoustics of a hall which provides the preferred environment forms the basis for the design of a music auditorium or any place for performing and listening to live music.

However, designing another hall with similar features does not necessarily ensure same acoustical qualities unless the shape, size, material, furniture, furnishings, etc. are copied to perfection. The plan cannot be upscaled or down-scaled and the slightest deviation in respect of any feature can and does alter acoustic characteristics

* Paper read at the International Seminar — Indian Music Insights, arranged by the Khairagarh Music University on October 27-30, 1983 at Bhopal.

significantly. It is for this reason that until about the beginning of this century, the popular feeling was that the acoustics of a hall could not be planned, it just happened. It was looked upon as an "Act of God".

Advances in Acoustics

Our knowledge of the science of sound and its application to building acoustics has advanced considerably during this century. It may not be possible to design the ideal music hall yet, but it is practicable to design a hall with good acoustics for music if the subjective requirements of the listener are identified and properly correlated to the physical parameters of the design. With computer facilities now available, it has been possible to make objective analysis of the musical sounds as heard in the preferred environments and to establish correlation between various subtle aspects of sound quality and physical parameters of building acoustics. Much of this work has been done following the preference of musicians in the West. In Indian music, while phenomenal attention is given to the correct rendering of the music, the tonal quality takes the back seat in many of our auditoria.

Reverberation

One very obvious feature of auditorium acoustics is the resounding or reverberation of sound. It is measured in terms of the time taken by the sound to decay to near inaudibility after the source has stopped. In any common environment the sound received by the listener consists of two parts—one direct from the source and the other received after repeated reflections

from various surfaces. The second part decreases in intensity gradually. This latter process of reverberation in optimum measure is a desirable feature for music listening. It not only enhances loudness of music but also creates an impression of fullness. If properly balanced, it can add warmth and liveness to music. Clarity of music is also linked to the ratio of the direct to reverberant sound. Quantitatively, reverberation time is a controllable parameter and is linked to the type of music and speed of music to be played.

Besides the two components of the received sound direct and reverberant, there is another factor, early reflections—sound reflected from surfaces close to the performer. Such early reflections give to the listener a sense of acoustic intimacy, the impression of listening to music in an intimate small hall. *Equal loudness of sound at all points in the audience is as important as good diffusion of sound so that there is a feeling of being enveloped in the musical sound.*

Feeling the sound

In all these considerations the attention cannot be focussed on the audience alone. *Listening by the performers is equally important.* The solo performer should be able to listen comfortably and well to the accompanying music. In an ensemble or orchestra, the musicians should be able to listen to each other well and comfortably. And in every case the musicians should be able to get a feel of the reverberant sound in the hall. It is within the realms of possibility to cater to all these requirements through appropriate acoustic design.

A Peculiar Situation

Qualitatively most of these conditions are universally applicable but there are certain problems which are peculiar to auditoria for Indian music that have not received the attention they deserve. A vast majority of the auditoria built in recent decades in India are *general purpose halls* for lectures, dramatics and music where *speech clarity takes precedence over requirements of music.* All this is socially acceptable - may be in a spirit of resignation! Traditionally, music has been played to gatherings in shamianas or cloth tents which acoustically match open space, in heavily furnished princely palace halls and in austere temple halls. In all these cases acoustics was not planned, it was only incidental and varied over a wide range. Music lovers, both performers and listeners, accepted the varying situations, may be because of concentration on the technical aspects of rendering the music.

Lots of other Noises

In the recently built halls it is not possible to keep the background noise low. In most cases it has not been possible to use air conditioning for various reasons and because of our climatic conditions, doors and windows are kept open. In addition, a number of electric fans are provided which create their own noise. *Total noise level in any gathering is a sort of chain reaction. If the background noise is already high, the gathering will talk above that level and make it higher.* To overcome this noise, resort is taken almost invariably to use a public address system of varying quality and loudness. The P. A. system changes the total quality, balance and distribution of sound con-

siderably and in most cases, the real sound from the stage is hardly noticed.

In these cases, since the design is based on use of loud speakers, to feed the audience area directly, ingress of loud speaker sound into the stage is limited for fear of feed back howl. Much of the live sound on the stage gets lost in the big stage house with high ceiling. The performers are thus not able to hear each other well and do not get the feel of the sound in the audience hall. To make up for this deficiency the loud speaker volume is raised to undue limits which is not only uncomfortable to the audience, it degenerates the tonal quality of sound.

Optimum listening Conditions

It is possible by suitable stage design or by using properly oriented nearby hard screens suitably disposed to provide on the stage optimum listening conditions for the performers. *The loud speaker system should be used only to reinforce the stage sound where necessary and not as a substitute for the original music.*

In auditorium design, reverberation time has to be controlled but the criteria for the duration and character of reverberation needed for our music have not been quantified. In Western music the criteria for chamber music concert halls and organ music have been determined. There is not much awareness as to the need for determining similar criteria for various types of Indian music. We have yet to determine whether acoustics required for Veena and Sitar is the same as that required for recital of Shahnai or Nadaswaram music.

All these points have to be answered to be able to design good auditoria for Indian music.

(With acknowledgments to the Khairagarh University.)

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Revamp Our Music Instrument Technology

By
SUBBUDU

Indian instruments are in dire need of improvements and rejuvenation. We talk about the sacred veena, the mridangam that adorned Nandi and of course the flute that Krishna handled. But do they meet the exacting demands of today is the question. It is no use of basking in their ancient glory. A simple statement will dispel all doubts in this connection. The violin from the West has driven all Indian instruments to the background in view of its compactness and versatility. I know theorists will say that the violin also originated here and drifted to the West. That is neither here nor there.

Problems with the Veena

Take the Veena, the pride of Indian instruments. It looks beautiful with an artistic demeanour. But at best it is only a chamber instrument. To travel with it, one has to buy another ticket to accommodate it in trains or Air. It is too brittle and does not admit of portability. The frets are moulded on a type of lacquer which behaves funnily with the change of weather, more so in India. In summer it melts and in winter it hardens. The slightest change in the Mettu would affect the pitch. So much so, we find best of Vainikas releasing apaswaras.

The bigger pot on the right is "supposed" to amplify. But the amplification is meagre and meant only for a

chamber. Despite so much scientific advance, we are yet to evolve a suitable well-meaning amplifier for this ancient instrument. The ones used only distort its tonal subtleties and one cannot discern whether it is the veena sound, a guitar or a Bul Bul Tarang.

The tuner knobs are the worst offenders. In winter they harden and one cannot tune them with any degree of accuracy. Either they are high or low and pin-point precision is hardly possible. Cannot someone devise suitable screws to replace these to ensure easy manoeuvrability? Surely, this would not be sacrilege. If the veena is to be restored to its ancient place of pride, it must be reoriented to admit of easy handling. Much of the time is spent on tuning and "managing", so that very little time is available for playing it actually. It also impairs the player's mood.

Updating the Mridangam

Then comes the mridangam. It comprises two wings (what a discovery?) one for tonal excellence and the other for vibrations. Before you get a heart attack, let me tell you that its pitch cannot exceed G sharp, that is, 5½ kattais. If a woman singer sports a pitch higher than this, there is no mridangam to accompany. Can there be a greater shame?

The pitch of a mridangam is related to its length. The shorter the instrument, the

higher the pitch achieved. It does need a C. V. Raman to evolve a mridangam to admit of tuning higher than 5½ sruthi. A shortening of length and thinning the layer of the black spot on the right would achieve the purpose. Yet no sincere effort has been made in this direction. And then the vagaries of the weather which affect the drum. Take it into a studio and it will start losing the pitch. Leather research has made great strides and still no Academy or Akademy has thought it worthwhile to make efforts to tan and produce leather which would withstand the vagaries of the weather.

Tuning Troubles

And its tuning is a standing shame. Can you imagine an instrument being beaten with a rock and a stump like wooden contraption? Can there be a greater cruelty on an instrument handled by Nandi? I have a hunch that the mridangam is paying for its past sins. Remember Nandi denying darshan to Saint Nandanar, the Harijan and Lord Siva getting angry with him and cursing him "Satru Vilagi Irumpilai" ("Move away from your posture, you bull"). That curse has got the mridangam into trouble, so much so that it gets beaten every time it is to be tuned.

What is the mechanism for tuning? It relates to the tautness of the leather straps. The tighter the straps the higher the sruthi. The 'Naal', another drum in the North has a screw which enables one to raise tautness. Can't something be done likewise for the mridangam? There is no use raising eyebrows and advancing reasons of tradition.

We must keep up with the times and make the best use of modern scientific advances. I am particularly stressing this because a high Sruthi for a female vocalist is a liability only for Carnatic singers as in the Hindustani style the Tabla can be raised even to the eighth pitch in the second octave. (8 kattais).

Flute Making can be improved

And now comes the bamboo contraption that seems to have taken birth in the bamboo forests of Assam, now Parkjothrisa. Hearing scintillating sounds emanating through holes in the bamboo, man harnessed it into a fine musical instrument, called the flute. And is it not Krishna's magic wand that enticed many a Gopi? And now we come to brass tacks. You have to break 'seven' bamboos to make one flute. The method is crude as the bamboo breaks when the holes are pierced.

In Western flutes, the method is scientific and bamboos are seasoned and pierced by modern methods. The notes have a relation to the distances between them and this can be measured scientifically and the frequencies determined. I must recall in this connection an incident in the Music Academy some years ago when an young engineer tried to demonstrate a German flute capable of any pitch. It also contained all the twenty-two notes, thereby eliminating the need for negotiating overtones by lips. But lo and behold, this young engineer was poohpoohed by others. They argued about tradition.

And this our flute cannot stand the vagaries of weather. In summer it misbehaves. In the studio it will go awry. If the lips get dried up, hell is let loose. As one plays the flute, it will get warmed up and the sruthi will start varying a wee bit. These are all avoidable risks and with modern scientific advancements can surely be rectified.

The same defects apply to all Indian wind instruments. You will be surprised to know that the Nagaswaram did not have a Suddha Madhyamam and this note was being negotiated by the trial and error

method. It was Rajaratnam who evolved an extra hole to admit of this.

The writing on the wall

I conclude by saying that where there is a will, there is a way. Let us not be bogged down by tradition which is a changing process and make amends for our long apathy towards our cherished instruments. If we go by default, electronic instruments would wipe away all ours. The writing is there on the wall and it is for us to take cognisance. The electronic Yamaha is making vast strides in this regard and before the tides devour us, we should heed the warning.

Trivandrum Latchumana Pillai Eminent Tamil Composer

By

K. L. Raman, Asst. Secretary, Tamil Nadu Iyal Isai Nataka Manram

Indian Classical Music can broadly be grouped under two heads Viz-Karnatak Music and Hindustani music. While these two styles of music have features of their own it is being increasingly conceded that Karnatak music has an edge over the other system by virtue of the hundreds of compositions by great musicians. These are vital to the performing artiste. Saint Thyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshithar and Syama Sastri are the main architects of Karnatak Music Kritis. Their songs are of varied interest with philosophic truths permeating all through. They depict the verities of human life, character and

emotions. They are saturated with Bhakthirasa and naturally have a high emotional appeal.

Concepts of Bhakthi

It may be worthwhile to compare the conception of bhakthi and modes of expressing it as among different composers. Jayadev of the 12th Century expressed his bhakthi in "Geetha Govindam". With his Devarnamas, Purandaradasa of the 16th Century sang and danced in ecstasy in praise of the Lord. Later, Thyagaraja poured out his heart in matchless composi-

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tions. But according to Theerthanarayana of 16th Century devotion becomes perfect only, when Puranic stories with spiritual and philosophic truths were enacted through opera, dance and dramas. The compositions of these saint composers were mostly in Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, etc.

The Tamil Classics

Though Thiruvasakam and Nalayira Divya Prabandam, Thiruppavai were all the earliest Tamil lyrics of immortal fame, the Tamil compositions of Arunachala Kavi-rayar and Gopalakrishna Bharathiar became popular and famous in due course.

Tamil lent itself to the creations of great beauty. The role played by Trivandrum Latchumana Pillai in composing several Tamil Kritis suited to various ragas was very noteworthy. He made a good contribution as a Sahithyakartha. It is estimated that he composed as many as 202 Kritis in Tamil.

This eminent musician and composer was born at Trivandrum on 3—5—1864 to Sri M. Diraviam Pillai and Smt. Balaramuvalli. From his infancy he started composing lyrics and songs. The relative scarcity of adequate Tamil musical compositions created in his mind an urgent impulse to compose songs in Tamil, at least to reduce the dominance of the compositions in Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada. In fact, he has pinpointed this idea in a preface to one of his books of musical kritis. The sweetness and the hoary traditions of the Tamil language fascinated him a good deal.

Muruga Bhakthi

In his seventh year, he was afflicted with a dreadful and dangerous ailment. The ailment caused his father Diraviam



SRI LATCHUMANA PILLAI

great concern. In accordance with the custom prevailing among the Hindus, Diraviam prayed to Lord Muruga of Tiruchendur and took a vow that his son would carry a 'kavadi' to him to seek His blessings in case he got cured. Accordingly, Latchumana Pillai, in fulfilment of his father's vow, carried a Kavadi to Tiruchendur temple and recited the verses of "Ponnar Meniyanae" and "Pithai Pirai Chudi" before Lord Muruga. The devotees who witnessed this incident were really moved by the sincerity and deep devotion of the little boy and prevailed upon his father to allow his son to take up seriously the learning of music. In deference to their wishes, Diraviam made necessary arrangements for the teaching of music to him. The music stalwart Mahavaidyanatha Iyer and the Tamil literary scholar Murugadasar, his father's friends, paved the way for his acquisition of knowledge of music and Tamil literature respectively.

Music Training

The first Sangita Vidwan who taught Latchumana Pillai the rudiments of music

was Pappu Pillai Bhagavathar who was an adept in the exposition of pallavi singing. He was so strong in this branch of music that none dared to compete with him in Pallavi singing. Having taught him the fundamentals of Karnatak Music for a period of six months, he appointed his brother Velu Pillai to teach him the nuances of Karnatak Music. He also learnt Veena from Ayya Bagavathar for a period of six months. The musical compositions of Swathi Thirunal were growing popular in those days. He had no opportunity of learning the Kritis of Saint Thyagaraja except "Sujana Jeevana" and "Seethapathe" in Khamas raga.

An Unselfish Guru

In his tenth year his family had to shift from Salai street to Pazhavankadi Street in Trivandrum. The shifting of his residence was a blessing in disguise to him. This provided him an opportunity of coming under the tutelage of Vanchiswara Bhagavathar alias Avinancheri Pitchu Bagavathar. He taught him not only Karnatak music but also discipline and the quality of selflessness. Pitchu Bhagavathar refused to take Rs. 100/- given by Latchumana Pillai as his 'guru kannikkai'. Without causing disappointment and displeasure to his disciple, Pitchu Bhagavathar took one rupee only as a token of his fee. In his fourteenth year he suffered from cholera. A Kriti "Thiruchendur Velavane" composed in Pantuvarali raga, dedicated to Lord Muruga, brought him instantaneous relief. This also marked the end of his musical training career.

He used to attend good musical programmes even if uninvited. In close proximity to his residence, there lived a

great Vainika by name "Chathu Bhagavathar". His Veena recital fascinated him very much and whenever Latchumana Pillai was free he used to frequent his residence and go into raptures on hearing the veena recital of this great vidwan.

Own Compositions

Based on the varna mettus "Mathuvaname" and "Narayana Narayana" he composed new sahithyams, in his seventeenth year. "Intha Manam oru sindanai yandiram" and a number of Tamil compositions were all composed after his twentieth year. The absence of too many "Sangathis" in the Pallavi of his Kritis is a special feature of his compositions. He never imagined that he would one day become one of the significant Sahithyakarthas.

He graduated in Philosophy in 1886 from the former Travancore University.

He came to Madras in his twentieth year in order to study the British Accounting System. His stay in Madras brought him in close touch with flute Saraba Sastri-gal. Besides in Trivandrum even he had the good fortune of hearing frequently the Veena recitals of Mahadeva Bhagavathar. The music recitals of Trivandrum Ramaswami Bhagavathar etc. moulded him as a musician also. He established the "Gana Samajam" through which he arranged Karnatak music recitals of eminent musicians with assistance and encouragement offered by the then Travancore Court and its musicians.

Progress of Composing

In the initial stages of his composing, the songs were set to the more popular ragas like Thodi, Kalyani and Bhairavi.

Subsequently he embarked upon composing kritis in rare and different ragas. He was of the firm view that the ragas and mettus set to lyrics should be natural and fluent. Accordingly all the ragas and mettus set to his compositions were spontaneous, natural and free from artificiality. He believed that if any Sahithyakartha is to be successful in his career, he should possess natural aptitude, spontaneous feelings, depth, deep devotion to God, purity of mind, righteousness in his actions, kindness towards living creatures, impeccable music training, some worldly wisdom, real and dedicated interest in music and last but not the least, a deep knowledge of the language and adequate vocabulary etc.

Patterns

He had composed songs in praise of several deities. Some of his kritis were composed in Melakarthis while several of his compositions were in 'Janya ragas'. Ragas like Nagasvarali, Useni, Behag, Punnagavarali, Yamunakalyani, Sama, Senjuruti claim our attention. A special Kriti viz "ஆற்றமில்லா அடிசயம்" dedicated to the memory of Emerson was composed in a new raga "Amarasenapriyai". A song relating to the emergence of the First World War was composed by him in "Themmangu" pattern. A song viz "சஞ்சலக் கடலிடை" with swara notations in raga Saraswathi Manohari was composed by him on a Western tune and note. He had composed some songs on Kummi and Nondhichindu style. In most of his musical compositions, Adi Tala was used. Talas like Rupakam, S. Ekam, Thisrachapu, Misra chapu were also used by him.

Publication

The first edition containing 202 sahithyams of Vidwan Latchumana Pillai, was dedicated to the erstwhile Rajah Balarama Varma. After having heard his kritis sung by him, Maharaja Chithrai Tirunal awarded a Coronation medal to Latchumana Pillai in appreciation of his significant services in the field of creative music. The second edition of his Kritis was published in 1949 by his own daughter Prof. Lakuminarayanan Nair. In this edition, his kritis have been published under three categories viz. Science (அறிவியல்), (அறவியல்), (மனக்கவியல்) Since the majority of his kritis were framed to certain specified talas and mettus, some works used by him were felt to contravene certain rules of grammar. Mr. Pillai contended that this poetical licence should be available to all sahithya composers.

Propagation of music was the only objective of his life. Many musicians had had the pride and privilege of having had training from him. Luminaries like Bidaram Krishnappa, Gayanapatu Saraswathi Bai, M. S. Mohanambal, M. S. Sarojini, Elakumi Narayana Nair, Sangeetha Bhushanam Jannamma, S. K. Sumathi are some of his notable disciples. Messrs Nagercoil Harihara Iyer, Sthanu Sastri-gal, father of Ganesa Iyer, all belonging to the Nagercoil Sangitha Paramparai popularised many of his Kritis.

Pamphleteer

Apart from musical compositions, he had also composed poems and written many articles on music and musicians. The evolution of Karnatak music in the former

Travancore State, the contribution made by that State's musicians were featured by him in his articles. These articles throw abundant light on several aspects of music. Mr. Pillai had also composed poems in praise of Swathi Tirunal Maharaja, Rajah Sir Annamalai chettiar etc. His descriptions of the music competition held at the state level between Mahavaidyanatha Iyer and Coimbatore Raghava Iyer, who was held in high esteem by Veena Dhanam, the efficacy of the flute music of Sarāba Sastrigal, the dominance of the violin wizard Thirukodikaval Krishna Iyer and the excellence of Nadaswaram recital of Sivakolundu Pillai of Kumbakonam are vivid cameos.

At the instance of Visharada Sangita Kalasigamani M. S. Ramaswami Iyer, the portrait of Latchumana Pillai was unveiled in the Travancore University.

Thamizh Thatha's Praise

Commenting on the poems and musical compositions of Latchumana Pillai, Thamiz Thatha Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer said: "Fine diction, apt usage of the words, deep meaning are the hallmarks of his poetical works. It would be difficult

for others to copy or imitate them". Such remarks coming from the Tamil literary giant speak volumes about the great scholarship and musical mettle of Mr. Pillai.

At the Tamil Songs (Tamil Isai) competition held at Annamalai University in Sept. 1941, his songs were considered as the best and awarded the first prize. The judges for this competition were the veterans: Late Prof. Sambamoorthi, Sri Ponniah Pillai, Tiger Varadachariar, Subramania Pillai etc.

In his personal life he had to endure a series of mishaps and misfortunes. None too robust himself, the untimely and premature death of his sons and daughters left his health shattered but were responsible for the qualities of sobriety, serenity, deep wisdom and a sense of detachment in life.

The portrait of this eminent Sahithyakartha was unveiled at the public Kalaimamani Award function held at Kalai vanar Arangam, Madras on 26-1-84 by Dr. M. G. Ramachandran, the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu. His portrait joins the portraits of other eminent deceased artists exhibited by the Mauram.

SOME OF TRIVANDRUM LAKSHMANA PILLAI'S TAMIL MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS

கனகாதனை	— நாட்டை	— ஆதி.
தனி இன்பம்	— சாரங்கா	— ரூபகம்
நம்பிநுட் சிவம்	— மலையமரஞ்சுதம்	— ஆதி.
ஆழ்கடநூற்று அடியுண்டு	— தேவாரனை	— ரூபகம்.
அன்பை மனங்குன்றி	— ஆரபி	— ஆதி.
அருமைக்கும் பெருமைதரும்	— கரகரப்பிரியா	— ரூபகம்.
ஒன்றே உயர்ச்சியம்	— பேகாச்	— ஆதி.
இன்பமும் உச்சரித்தால்	— நீலம்பரி	— சாபு
கடவுளை அநியாத	— கானடா	— ரூபகம்.
சித்திக்கி சித்திக்கி தித்திக்குமே	— பந்துறாளி	— ஆதி.

Bharatanatyam : A Foreign Dancer's Experience

BY

MURRAY BRUCE TURNER *

Dance Roots

In the late 70's I was working in the outer reaches of Australian theatre, adventuring with ways of producing and ways of seeing art, specifically theatre. Whenever I see dance, I see theatre, and vice versa. Why I link dance to theatre is because I see dance and for that matter, drama—they are not essentially different—as children, albeit overdrawn children, of theatre. From the Greek, *theatron*: the means, instrument or location of an act of awareness. I think it most important that we recover the full meaning, the full purpose of the word. I wasn't all that keen on keeping with theatre without dance training, and as well was finding myself constantly frustrated by the dreary lack of vision—I suppose a dissatisfaction with subject-matter—in much Western stage art. Possibly the last refuge of aesthetic and ethical banality.

Early Training in Melbourne

Consequently, innocent of Indian stage realities, banal as they can be, but embracing Bharatanatyam as a lover never

to be relinquished once glimpsed, I took up dance under Chandrabhanu in Melbourne. I trained in the basics under Chandrabhanu for three years. Each of my gurus provided me with a personal challenge. My relationships with my gurus are always wonderfilled—I felt at home at once with Bharatanatyam. Something bright as the sun had taken root in the dark soil of my questing soul. And being not altogether comfortable in Australia, I leapt for the unknown with such force that every frustrated fear I'd ever harboured rushed to embrace me, and as though waking to find light flooding the room, I awoke an infant in the arms of Mother India.

Tradition, Dialogue, Music

I can most readily understand tradition as dialogue. The subject matter—the informing, telling part—is of course important. But equally, it is quite irrelevant to the truth of whatever is being told. Something told badly in effect has no essence. So, as an artist, I achieve the universal

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creative purpose of dialogue, and reach towards natural or universal understandings, through aesthetic and ethical means. For example, I want to communicate to you my essence, my identity, what makes me Me. And though I'm familiar with the Indian tradition and its goal of harmonizing personality, and am conversant with this tradition to the best ability of my tradition, tradition belongs to our immediate understanding of each other only in so far as it is subject to artistic transformations. Art is not a tradition. Tradition, though, is an art.

They Coincide

When I dance, I discover that the two *streams* of Indian dialogue, *smriti* and *sruti*, transmission and revelation; the two *voices* of Indian dialogue, *natarka-natarki* and *rasika*, coincide in the dance. I feel this directly and not simply as the end of an intellectual operation. How can I explain? Music, as we all know, is what makes the world go around. - Is the world before anything else ever exists. Music is self-revealing. Music is the hallmark of freedom. Music creates speech and movement - because only through speech and movement, can we create music.

Each one of us: moving in time and space: speaking through time and space - does so as an emotional whole. Or as an emotional part - that part that forever attempts to recover its emotional unity. Which recovery is the recapture of the irreducible form of emotion; which, as it happens, isn't an idea, or a bit out of a computer program, but music - Ecstasy. Music is the very light, the earth, the air and the ecstasy of the Indian condition, or

as I have put it, the Indian dialogue. *Smriti*, *sruti*, *guru*, *sisya*, etc. need not be choreographed to be performed. Though certainly, Indian Dance, whatever its future, will reveal musical essences only if it somehow incorporates these faces, voices and forms, indispensable to the Indian Dance language.

No Pain

Through all the pain, physical and mental, and the tedium of learning Bharatanatyam, I believe that a persistent drive to understand the nature of *adhavu*, *korvai*, *swarajati* and *sancharibhava* eventually pays dance dividends - meanings - which, if dancing I fail to comprehend, speak of my inadequacy, not the dance. This complete understanding of the role of the dancer, I take to be *bhakti* - the dancer to dance, sacrifices himself or herself to the dance, and ultimately to the Deity, whether Lord Siva, the Divine Mother or Lord Krishna, no matter, all are One, all are One in Dance. Bharatanatyam monodance (a multidimensional dramatic technology that applies just as well to group work), is so emotionally profound, that it can be no less than the consummate code of *passion* on one hand, *compassion* on the other. If *Abhinaya* - the dance theory of the unified voice - bathes me in *rasa*, then I have savoured the world in entirety.

Once a skill is partially acquired, then comes the pain of realizing that nothing is understood. In taming the beast, memory, guidance and repetition, have creative and destructive responsibilities: the creation of a time-destroying space in which memory has no repetition. No justification. Not even pain. Armed with time-destroying language of Bharatanatyam

I slough the useless flesh of self-concern, and enter the Ocean of Dance. *Sancharibhava* really is the most exhilarating of dance-dramatic methods.

If the dancer doesn't have control in *bhava*, she or he won't have control in *nritta*, and vice-versa - Both *nritta* and *nritya* are *rasa*-based, there's no doubt in my mind on that score. Unlike Modern and Post-Modern Dance and contemporary international theatres, in which the body

has a much less extended and more issues-oriented role to play, the body in Bharatanatyam is the dancer's and observer's personal experience of The Body Beautiful of The Life Divine - In every sense an entertaining and instructive experience.

To conclude, I would like, if I may, to dedicate this brief exposition of ideas and experiences to my gurus, Kalaimamani Sri Adyar K. Lakshmanan and Smt. Nirmala Ramachandran.

Homage to Sri Swati Tirunal, the Composer of Composers

By
S. NATARAJAN

The entire musical community of Kerala came forward in an unprecedented manner to pay their humble homage to the glorious memory of that composer of composers, Sri Swati Tirunal Maharaja whose 171st birth anniversary fell on the 16th April, 1984. It seemed that this tremendous spirit and fervour derived a fillip from the recent 'apasaruthi' produced in Tamil Nadu by some interested parties. One could not escape the thought that the

traducers of the Maharaja unwittingly did a yeoman service to him in this regard. The day was celebrated on a grand scale throughout the length and breadth of the State with musical concerts (in which only Swati compositions were presented) and symposia by Sangeetha Sabhas from the northern most Cannanore to the capital city down south. The following were some of the note-worthy concerts held in different regions of the State.

Centre	Sabha	Artists who performed
1. Cannanore	Sangeeta Sabha, Cannanore.	C. Saroja & C. Lalitha A. Kanyakumari & R. Ramesh,
2. Calicut	Sadguru Sangeeta Sabha, Calicut.	Voletti Venkiteswaralu Peri Sriramamurthy and V. Kamalakara Rao.

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Jayalakshmi Sreenivasan, V.V. Ravi,
N. Hari and C. K. Shamsunder,

4. Trichur Vivekananda Sangeeta
Sabha, Trichur.

M. L. Vasanthakumari, Kanya-
kumari and T. R. Rajamony,

5. Kodungallur Kodungallur Sangeeta
Sabha, Muvattupuzha.

Charumathy Ramachandran
T. H. Lalitha. K. V. Prasad,
R. Gopinatha Prabhu.

6. Muvattupuzha Shatkala Sangeeta Sabha,
Muvattupuzha.

V. R. Krishnan, T. S. Babu
Mavelikara Velukutty Nair.

7. Alleppey Raja Rajeswari Sangeeta
Sabha, Alleppey.

T. V. Gopalakrishnan, Chalakudy
Narayanaswamy, Palghat Raghu,

The three stations of All India Radio, Trivandrum, Alleppey and Calicut also co-operated whole heartedly in this venture by recording these programmes at the various centres and subsequently broadcasting them as per regular schedule every night. Two such outstanding concerts were those rendered by Madurai T. N. Seshagopalan (B. Sasikumar—Violin, Guruvayoor Dorai - Mridangam, T. V. Vasan - Ghatom) and Trichur V. Ramachandran (V. V. Subramaniam - Violin, Mavelikara Krishnankutty Nair - Mridangam and Karthikeyan - Ghatom) arranged by Sri Swati Tirunal Sangeeta Sabha, Trivandrum

Iyengar (Veena), Palghat K.V. Narayanaswamy, Madurai Seshagopalan, Trichur V. Ramachandran and Shyamala Bhav of Bangalore also graced the festival. Only Swati Tirunal compositions were rendered in these concerts and the aswadakas had their fill of the rich variety of the Swati kritis. Another delightful feature was the rendering of the Navarathri Kirtanas of Swati Tirunal in chorus by a select group of artists which lasted for more than two hours.

The Swati Symposium

The fortnight-long celebrations (4—4—1984 to 16—4—1984) organised by the Sri Swati Tirunal Sangeeta Sabha, Trivandram stood out for the wide range and content of the fare offered to the music lovers of Trivandrum. Two concerts were arranged each evening. Besides several brilliant local Vidwans and Vidushis, doyens like Mysore Doraiswamy

The Swati Tirunal Symposium arranged by the Sabha on the 16th April proved to be a befitting finale to these celebrations in which eminent musicologists and scholars viz, Sri T. S. Parthasarathy, Secretary, Madras Music Academy, Dr. Rajanikanta Rao, producer Emeritus of All India Radio, Hyderabad, Smt. Leela Omchery of the Faculty of Music and Fine Arts, Delhi University, Dr. S. Venkatasubramonia Iyer of Trivand-

rum, and the eminent danseuse Dr. Kanak Rele, Dean, Facults of Fine Arts, Bombay University, the foremost exponent of Mohiniattom in the country, participated. Shri Marthanda Varma, Elayaraja of Travancore, chaired the Symposium.

In his learned address, Sri Parthasarathy refuted the ill-founded allegations against the composing greatness of Swati Tirunal. According to him, the presumption that the songs of the Maharaja became popular only after the establishment of the Swati Tirunal Music Academy at Trivandrum and through the efforts of Dr. Muthiah Bhagavatar and Dr. Semmangudy Sreenivasa Iyer were wrong. Although these two musicians have rendered considerable service to the publication of the Swati Kritis with notation, it is incorrect to say that these kritis were not known in the Carnatic music world earlier. In fact, the earliest publication to contain the Swati Kriti 'SARASA SAMA MUKHA' in raga Khamas was the "Sangeeta Sarvatra Sara Sangrahamulu" in Telugu script edited by Veena Ramanujayya in 1859 at Madras, (i.e., just 11 years after the demise of Swati Tirunal. This kriti was repeated by Tachoor Singaracharlu in his "Gayaka Parijatam" in 1877 and by A. M. Chinnaswami Mudaliar in his "Oriental Music in European Notation" in 1892. The "Gayaka Lochanam" published by Singaracharlu in 1902 contained 12 Swati Songs. Sri Parthasarathy also pointed out that in his monumental work "Sangeeta Sampradaya pradarsini" published in 1905, Subba Rama Dikshitar had not only included the kriti 'Sarasa

Sama mukha' but also had given a brilliant biographical account of the Maharaja.

By 1913, the number of Swati Tirunal songs in circulation in Madras increased considerably which is amply evidenced by the fact that T. P. Kodandarama Iyer in his "Bhagavad Bhajana Paddhathi" published in that year included as many as 51 Swati Tirunal kritis. Mr. Parthasarathy said that Swati Tirunal was a prodigy so far as learning languages was concerned and his forte was Sanskrit. Fully equipped, even at a young age, in music and several languages, he soon developed a style of his own which was evident in all his compositions and gave them an individuality.

Sri Parthasarathy also pointed out the significant fact that Swati Tirunal was the only South Indian Composer who composed Dhrupads, Khayals and Tappas in the true Hindustani style. Swati Tirunal had the credit of not only composing his kritis in different languages and in various styles, but also of introducing new ragas like Lalithapanchamom and Mohanakalyani. He was also a brilliant vocalist and an adept in playing the instrument Swarabat. According to Sri Parthasarathy, at the time of Swati, there was a musical highway between Travancore and Thanjavur. Kannayya Bhagavatar, disciple of Tyagaraja, Vadivelu, disciple of Dikshitar, Meruswamy and others from Thanjavur visited Travancore and stayed at his court and kept him fully informed of the current developments in the field of Carnatic music. Shatkala Govinda Marar, a court Vidwan

of the Maharaja, visited Tiruvaiyar and had met Tyagaraja. Sri Parthasarathy concluded with the observation that the Maharaja was one of the most colourful and versatile personalities in Indian history and his birth day should be celebrated in every part of India.

In her paper, Smt. Leela Omchery gave a graphic account of the very rich musical atmosphere in which Swati Tirunal was born. Rani Parvathi Bayi, the dowager queen and the aunt of the Maharaja, herself an accomplished Vainika, musician and above all a composer, initiated the musical training of the Maharaja at a very early age. Leela Omchery rendered a composition of Rani Parvathi Bayi "Sarasija Nayane Parimala gathri" in the traditional sopana style of music, unique to Kerala, in the Sopana Raga 'Puraneer'. She also sang Swati padams in ragas Neelambari, Pantuvarali and Asaveri and another Swati Varnam in raga Sankarabharanam in the traditional sopana style. In her well-researched paper, she gave a good estimate of the musical contributions of the Maharaja.

Dr. Rajanikanta Rao commenced his paper ("The two operas of Swati Tirunal") by comparing the Maharaja with Adi Sankara, as one of the greatest integrators of Indian culture. Dr. Rao cited the evolution of the Bhakti cult from the times of "Alwars" and "Nayanars" and the delightful synthesis of music, dance and drama found in Geeta Govinda of Jayadeva and subsequently in Annamacharya, Purandaradas and Kshetrajna. He elaborated the Desi and Shastrik elements in

the lyrical compositions and how a harmonious blending of those elements is eminently achieved in Swati compositions. Dr. Rao delved deep into the Sankeertana, Bhagavatamela Sampradayas in the light of which he assessed the form and content of the two operas of Swati—Ajamilopakhyanam and Kuchelopakhyanam—which he substantiated as gems in this particular branch of musical form. Dr. Rao concluded by pointing out the comprehensive capacity of Swati in his multi-lingual empire.

Dr. Kanak Rele, in her highly technical paper on the "Concept of Nayika in the Padas and Pada Varnas of Swati Tirunal" provided sufficient background for the understanding of the subject by elaborating on the Rasa and Dhvani theories and the Nayika Bhedas as revealed in the works of Vaishnavite Saints Alwars as also in Bharata's Natya Sastra. In the outpourings of his deep love and devotion to Lord Padmanabha, Swati follows the time-honoured Vaishnavite mysticism, as propounded by the Alwars. According to Dr. Rele, Swati is the eternal Nayika, the *jivatma* yearning for the union with Paramatma wherein he brings the entire gamut of Nayika bhedas. Swati's padas and pada varnas, she averred, can be classed as the most exquisite ones reflecting the loftiest emotions of 'Madhura Bhakthi.' Dr. Rele enunciated the different types of 'ashta nayikas' like 'Vasaka Sajjaka', 'Virahothkanditha', 'Swadhinabharthrika' etc., and gave out examples of different Swati padas depicting them. The Mohiniattom demonstration rendered by her after reading out her paper went a long way to substantiate all her points. For this, she selected a rare

pada "Poonthen Neer Mozhi" in ragā Ananda Bhairavi which used to be rendered in the traditional sopana style by 'Mullamoodu Bhagavatars.' The vocal assistance provided by Kavalom Sreekumar was exquisite bringing out the unique tilling style of sopanam to the efficient Maddalom accompaniment of Sivamohan. It was really an enthralling experience to the packed house in the Karthikathirunal Theatre.

Dr. Venkitasubramonia Iyer delivered the concluding address in the symposium.

A Veteran Musicologist of Kerala

By

T. S. PARTHASARATHY.

The world of Carnatic musicology is all the poorer by the passing away, on 18th April 1984, at Trivandrum of Dr. S. Venkitasubramonia Iyer. Dr. Iyer's area of study was originally Sanskrit and he retired as the Head of the Department of Sanskrit in the University of Kerala. But his passion in life was music. Even early in life he had acquired a substantial knowledge of music in its theory and practice. He then turned his meticulous attention to research and soon became an acknowledged authority on the contribution of Kerala to Carnatic music. He was an ardent admirer of Swati Tirunal and concentrated his energies on the study and interpretation of the Ruler's life and work. For ever three decades he wrote tirelessly on his favourite theme and became the most dependable interpreter of the royal composer. His efforts culminated in the publication, in 1975, of his authoritative work 'Swati Tirunal and His music'.

The Kerala Fine Arts Society of Cochln also arranged a similar symposium in May 13 at Cochln which was chaired by Shri. M. K. K. Nayar. Shri T. S. Parthasarathy, V. Madhavan Nair (Mali) and R. Indusekharan actively participated in this symposium. It was a full day programme and in the morning a group of talented musicians presented select compositions of Swati Tirunal. The symposium in the evening was followed by a brilliant vocal music concert by Trichur V. Ramachandran and party.

Dr. Iyer's deep scholarship in Sanskrit is reflected in every page of the work as Swati Tirunals's forte was Sanskrit though he was a linguist. Iyer read practically every word that had been written about Swathi Tirunal and has furnished a select bibliography on the subject in his book. He also corrected many textual errors that had crept into the Maharaja's songs by the passage of time and gave the music world their correct versions. His 'Conspectus of the compositions of Svati Tirunal' comprising 397 songs is really a treasure.

Iyer had also made a thorough analysis of the compositions of Irayimman Tampi and other composers of Kerala like Nilakantha Sivan. He was closely associated with the Madras Music Academy and presented scholarly lecture demonstrations on various topics like the 'Utsava Prabhandas of Syati Tirunal'. During

(continued on page 41)

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Letter from America

Enraptured by the music flowing from the violins of Padmashree Lalgudi Jayaraman, and his son Sri Krishnan and the deft drumming on the mridangam by professor Trichy Sankaran, the listeners remain oblivious to the late evening hour and to the long drive back home to follow. Technology through electronics seems to contribute further to the silence of the disciplined audience by removing the proverbial tick from the wrist watches and clocks in the auditorium! Soon, copious praises are showered on the musicians, the title Tala Vadya Prakasa is conferred on Professor Sankaran. and the Honorable Sri S. Ramachandran, Minister of Energy for the State of Tamil Nadu and other dignatories present the awards. The music resumes and continues well past midnight, and when it does end, many are eager to wait and express their keen appreciation to the artistes.

I may well be describing a typical concert at the Music Academy, Madras, but the story to be told is that of a group of dedicated enthusiasts, thousands of miles away from Mother India, amidst an alien culture of rock and disco, paying homage to the noble art of Carnatic music! The concert described is the farewell concert of Lalgudi Jayaraman and Party in New York, the culmination of a long string of successful performances in the North

American continent as part of a tour sponsored by the Carnatic Music Association of North America, the subject of this article.

A lot of Home work

The contented smiles on the faces of the Trustees and the President do not speak of the long hours spent at the visa sections of the State Department, the frantic intercontinental phone calls to clear up last minute snitches, or the hundreds of miles driven in gruelling traffic to and from distant airports and concert halls, but only proclaim the rich rewards reaped therefrom. In these days of electronics, when sound can be reproduced with near perfect fidelity and when enchanting music can even be created on digital computers, what drives these men and women, (some of whom are engaged in the very research creating such technology) to get involved in such activities? Is it the legacy of the culture they grew up with in India or an attempt to maintain a link with it? Or is it all, as a cynic may say, just vanity? These may be tantalizing research issues for a social psychologist, but to those that have tasted the nectar of Carnatic music, these are all too familiar. Didn't someone after all, say "Pasurvetti, sisurvetti, vett ganarasam phani?"

Our Great Artists

Before I tell the story of our Association, I would, however, like to give briefly

my reflections on the Lalgudi tour, the first such that I was involved with as the new Secretary of the Association. For, it is the artistes we sponsor that make our efforts worth-while and bear fruit. In my short speech at the farewell concert, I said that Messrs. Jayaraman and Krishnan are a living example of the words of the great Tiruvalluvar viz.,

"The best help that a father can give to his son is to be worthy of being brought to the front rank."

"The best service that a son can render unto his father is to make the world wonder what penance the father did to beget him."

I also recall saying that these two not only share the honour of being members of the Tyagaraja Sishya Parampara, but indeed add honour to that Parampara. The title Tala Vadya Prakasa conferred on Sankaran may mean "one who shines by the Talavadya" or "one who adds lustre to the Talavadya". His contributions to the art of percussion in the Carnatic tradition by his consistently splendid performances, demonstrations and lectures and research, as well as his zeal and untiring efforts to propagate this art in the Western hemisphere are what this title reflects. Each of the concerts given by these great artistes was a grand success. Their very first concert in Washington, D.C., was a masterpiece despite the jet lag the violinists had hardly any time to recover from. These men are, after all, leaders in their field and you have undoubtedly witnessed enough of their talents. They, through their splendid performances and their

pleasant personalities, like the other artistes sponsored by us in the past, added substantially to the prestige of our organization and brought spontaneous letters of praise from both regional organizers and audiences. I take this opportunity to record the profound appreciation of all of us to all these great artistes.

Birth of an Association

The origins of the Carnatic Music Association of North America can be traced back to a persuasive letter dated January 23, 1976 from Dr. P. Rajagopalan, the first and the current President of CMANA, to a handful of friends proposing that a non-profit academy "devoted entirely to the promotion and propagation of Carnatic music in the States and Canada" be formed. The dormant interest in Carnatic music in these persons had been "kindled to a blaze", by the sporadic visits of a few leading Carnatic musicians brought by small groups of enterprising individuals who had assumed substantial financial risk and had suffered considerable hardship in arranging these. The need for the creation of an organization with a sufficiently large membership to provide a dependable financial base for underwriting concert tours and an infrastructure to efficiently organize such tours was eminently clear.

Besides organizing concert tours of musicians, Dr. Rajagopalan suggested that the proposed organization should cover a wide spectrum of activities in the service of Carnatic music, such as assisting local cultural societies in organizing music concerts, encouraging talented musicians "among us here" by providing a forum for

them to perform, promoting periodical panel discussions and lecture demonstrations on the finer aspects of Carnatic music, initiating music appreciation groups for enhanced understanding and enjoyment of the beauty of Carnatic music, and observing the birthdays of the important composers of Carnatic music in a fitting manner. The encouraging response to that letter resulted in the formation of the Carnatic Music Academy of North America with an initial membership of fifty three. To comply with the laws of the State of New York, where it is registered as a "not-for-profit organization", its name was later changed to "The Carnatic Music Association of North America." The Association was inaugurated on April 17, 1979 by Sri C. V. Narasimhan, Former Under Secretary General of the United Nations and a notable lover of Carnatic music. As though to assert that the founders of the Association intended to back their words with action, a concert by Sri T. V. Sankaranarayanan and Party was arranged on that same day as part of the inaugural function.

An Illustrious record

In the short span of seven years since that eventful day in 1976, the Association has established a record that is truly amazing. Besides sponsoring or co-sponsoring the concert tours of the States and Canada by such eminent musicians as Sangeetha Kalanidhi D. K. Pattammal, Veena Maestro S. Balachander, Vidwan Tanjore S. Kalyanaraman, Smt. Mani Krishnaswamy, Sri Maharajapuram Santhanam, and Flute Vidwan Sri Suresh, the Association organized the only concert given by Flute Mali in North America,

arranged a concert by Sangeetha Kalanidhi Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi, arranged a series of lectures by the eminent musicologist Sri Rangaramanuja Iyengar, published two volumes of the newsletter "Sangeetham", and initiated the tradition of celebrating the "Great Composers' Day" every year. It also sponsored a concert tour of the Hindustani artiste Parween Sultana. To this illustrious record we have added in 1983 the concert tour of Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman and Party, a concert by Professor K. V. Narayanaswamy, and Veena recitals by Smt. Muthulakshmi Ranganathan and by Smt. Ranganayaki Soundararajan. Our 1983 celebration of the Great Composers' Day featured a moving Harikatha discourse on the greatness of the Music Trinity by Sri Balakrishna Sastrigal. Also two more issues of the newsletter "Sangeetham" have been published, and twenty five new life members have been enrolled.

Modus Operandi

The Association has at present 151 members each having donated 100 dollars towards life membership which is the only kind available. Under the watchful eye of the State of New York, the affairs of the Association are conducted in the best of democratic traditions. Decisions such as the choice of the artistes to sponsor, compensation for them etc., are arrived at by a vote of the Board of Trustees. A team of four office bearers among them execute these decisions. Suggestions of members are given due consideration in this process. The entire Board of Trustees, except for a small number filling interim vacancies, are elected by the General Body of members

which also sets the overall guidelines and directions for their actions. The Board has a limited two years term and has to abide by a well written constitution. An efficient Regional Chapter of the Association in Washington, D.C., is run along the same lines in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.

A Dream to Realize

We see our goal not merely as one of providing entertainment but as one of supporting, preserving and propagating the art of Carnatic music. We envisage a not too distant future when every major city in the U. S. and Canada will have a local Chapter and when we can pursue our goals without the worries of financial viability. This is not a dream, but a goal we are consistently working towards. To attain this lofty deal, we seek the assistance, patronage, and partnership of the Indian community in the North American continent, the

Governments of the U.S. and India and their respective States, philanthropists, other cultural associations here and in India, and above all, the artistes.

To our members, besides the great satisfaction and joy of contributing to a worthy cause, we offer some benefits such as a tape of a concert of each musician sponsored by us, at cost. To the government agencies and other philanthropic organizations, we offer an efficient arm to support a beautiful art and to propagate a valuable cultural heritage. To the artistes we offer excellent opportunities to serve their art, a well orchestrated exposure in the Western hemisphere, attractive monetary benefits, and, above all, our warm hospitality. Most importantly, to posterity we leave a fine legacy of the great art of Carnatic music performed on these shores.

Dr. V. Ramaswami
Secretary, CMANA*

(Continued from Page 35)

December 1984 He delivered the 'Dr. V. Raghavan Shashtyabdapurti endowment lecture' at the Academy on 'the Contribution of Kerala to Carnatic Music'. He continued publishing the songs of Svati Tirunal in handy volumes and his latest was 'Svati Tirunal Kirtanamalas' published this year with notation in the Roman script and an English translation.

In addition to his *magnum opus* on Svati Tirunal, Iyer published 'Sangita

Sastra Pravesika', in Malayalam on the theory of music and a Malayalam translation of the 'Sangita Kalpadrumam', a Tamil work on ancient musical theory by Gayakasikhamani L. Muthayya Bhagavatar.

His geniality was exemplary but he was such an embodiment of humility that he would never project himself in any company. He did not hanker after publicity and led a quiet life at Trivandrum.

* For more details about CMANA and for membership application, please contact CMANA, 190-15, Nero Avenue, Holliswood, N.N. 11423, or call us at 212-776-6595. Interested artists may contact the President of the Association at the above address.



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M. D. Ramanathan, A Great Musician

Manjappara Devasa Ramanathan, a Batchelor of Science from the Victoria College, Palghat, when he sought admission in 1944 for the Siromani course in music conducted by Kalakshetra, would have little imagined what a towering musician he would one day become. And yet, the appetite of a true Sadhaka, for guidance by the mighty Tiger Varadachariar was gnawing his vitals at a very young age and hence the knocking at the gates of Kalakshetra where Tiger presided over the music department with rare distinction. What since transpired is part of the musical annals not only of Kalakshetra but India itself. After carving for himself a secure niche in the minds and affections of thousands of true rasikas, MDR shuffled off his mortal coils in April 1984 at the age of 61 years and presumably has joined his great Guru in the Elysian fields

Lucky debut

Such are the tricks of destiny that MDR, a mature, full-grown musician, owed his entry into big time, the prestigious festivals of the Madras Music Academy, to a fortuitous occurrence, as a stop-gap artiste whose flowering talent was then known to Prof. T. N. Krishnan and whose recommendation in favour of MDR was readily accepted by the Academy. MDR stormed the citadel of music and won the hearts of professionals and laymen alike with his expansive Vidwat, a deeply resonant and rich, melodic voice and inspired singing of Kritis, rendered conspicuously enough in a Kalapramana large as life. Since that day of the tryst with

fortune, MDR never looked back until fate slit the thin spun web of his life this year.

Hard work

This giant of an oak tree may have flowered late but till it fell, it was one of the tallest in the musical flora of our country. His sincere and avid gurukulavasa under "Tiger" was unquestionably the spring that quenched his musical thirst. Added to that, of course, was his enormous "sadakam", as a result of which his fine voice grew in richness, bhava and breadth, while his tenacious adherence to Sampradaya stamped him as a truly classical artiste. His "sangitha-gnana" was Cable of absorbing such a large amount of the essence of Carnatic music, its tenderness, ripeness, serenity and aesthetic beauty, as to be infused with a high emotional appeal and even divinity. As Mr. K. Chandrasekaran said in his letter of condolence sent to Kalakshetra, "Ramanathan's voice gained majesty and depth and moved like a great mountain stream...his voice registered at every turn of its grand gait...and the rasika knew that he was in the presence of great music."

Gold-digger of Music

When Ramanathan was in one of his best moods and sang, his music touched us in our sensitive chords and something intensely vibrant pierced the seat of our own sensibilities. His raga alapanas often put us in mind of a gold or diamond prospector, digging up large lodes and often striking it rich. Certain

ragas became his domain so to speak, e. g. Yadukulakhamboji, Ritigowla, Shama, Bilahari, Purvikatyani. While he was delving into them, even experienced musicians as listeners would come under the spell of the incomparably suggestive power of his handling, his soft attacks, the adumbration of phrases of exquisite roundness, colouring and subtlety, rolling out of his rich voice like freshly minted coins. On such occasions, this writer has felt that MDR infused a third dimension into his music.

Vast compass of Ideas

Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer gave expression to this aspect of MDR at the condolence meeting held at Kalakshetra on 5th May 1984 under the banyan tree, when Rukmini Devi presided. Semmangudi likened some of MDR's phrases to 'rounded pearls' issuing from the great vocalist. Umāyālpuram K. Sivaraman, the mridangam maestro, who has accompanied MDR on innumerable occasions and every time was almost a co-participant in the singing by virtue of the inimitable way he used to fill up the gaps in MDR's music with artistic touches on the mridangam, also spoke on the occasion. Mr. Sivaraman referred to the "vast compass of ideas" in MDR's elaboration of Yadukulakhamboji and his Vilambakala handling of kritis being a rare treat.

Exponent of Slow, Solemn music

Gayakasikhamani Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar was an epitome of the "madhyamakala" in Carnatic music. In recent years, rasikas' ears are increasingly pounded by 'dhuritakala' expositions (which have incidentally heightened the role of the

percussionists in the scheme of things.) Against this spreading desert in our music, MDR's deliberate choice of Vilambakala was an oasis with its green palms and luscious dates. To Ramanathan, his extended kalapramana (with which most of the present younger generation has no patience) was a sort of fine tool with which he probed the inner core of the kritis of Thyagaraja and Shyama Sastry and came up with apocalyptic visions of their true beauty. When MDR sang 'Dorakuna' or 'Diwakaram Sanaisaram' or 'Jananinuvinu' (Ritigowla) in his inspired moments, one felt that he experienced an ecstatic consciousness of their artistic content; and that every sangathi he improvised yielded fresh illuminations of the song to our sensitised faculties. His thorough grasp of Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil made him fully alive to the nuances of the sahitya and the inner meaning of the kritis. And no praise can be too high for MDR's modesty.

Whatever his detractors may say, MDR's music was to him an intensely felt experience, a shared personal expression of aesthetic sensitivity and enjoyment. No student of the musical history of our times can ignore MDR's monastic and total self-denial of the flamboyant values which, by the operation of Gresham's Law in music, are driving bhava-sphurita music more and more out of circulation. As the venerable Sankara Menon observed at the condolence meeting, Ramanathan's handling of Thyagaraja kritis amounted to a 'commentary' (bhashya) on Thyagaraja—really 'amrita' to the ear.

Fine Repertoire

This writer has been present at

hundreds of concerts of Carnatic music. Yet, he has to confess that only MDR has been known to elaborate Vasanthavarali raga and sing with total involvement 'Pahirama dhootha', one of the most moving of Thyagaraja's kritis on Lord Anjaneya (and probably the only kriti in that raga by any composer). That was stuff of which dreams are made of.

With the demise of MDR, we have probably lost for ever the 'padanthara' for

so many of Tiger Varadachariar's creative gems—his varnams in Vachaspathi, Bahudari, Yadhukulakhamboji, Begada, Arabhi, Kalyani, Kedaram, Abhogi, Durbar, Sriranjini, Saveri, Manirangu, Janaranjani etc. All honour to the departed soul, a magnificent musician and a gentleman to his finger tips. Not Kalakshetra alone but classical music has suffered an irreparable loss in the death of M.D. Ramanathan.

K. S. M.

Sangeetha Kalanidhi Tiruveezhimazhalai Subramania Pillai

In the demise of the veteran Nadaswara Vidwan Sangeetha Kalanidhi T. S. Subramania Pillai in June 1984 at the ripe old age of 90 the Carnatic music world has lost the doyen of Nadaswaram artistes. It has in fact created a void in the domain of the hoary Nadaswaram art.

Born in Thiruveezhimazhalai of Thanjavur District, Subramania Pillai hailed from a traditional family of Nadaswara vidwans. He learnt the art from his own father Swaminatha Pillai and soon acquired name and fame in this unique wind instrument. Along with his younger brother Kalaimamani Thiru T. S. Nataraja Sundaram Pillai and under the name of "Tiruveezhimazhalai Brothers", accompanied by the veteran Thavil artist Needamangalam Meenakshi

Sundaram Pillai, he gave innumerable Nadaswaram concerts not only in Tamilnadu, Andhrapradesh, Kerala and Karnataka but also in several important cities in India.

His Nadaswaram playing was noted for its melody and chaste and Sampradaya Carnatic music. He was the Asthanavidwan of Dharmapuram and Tiruvavadu-thurai Atheenams. He was the first Nadaswara Vidwan who was awarded Sangeetha Kalanidhi by the Music Academy, the premier music cultural body of India. The Central Sangeetha Nataka Academy also conferred on him its award in recognition of his eminence in this art. He was mainly instrumental for the inception of Nadaswaram and Thavil courses in the Music Colleges of Tamilnadu.

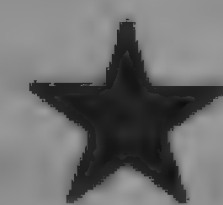
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News & Notes

Mridangam Vidwan Vellore Ramabhadran was the recipient of the Palghat Mani Award (a cash award of Rs. 1,500/- besides other insignia) at the hands of Sri V. S. Malimath, Chief Justice of Karnataka, at a very big function organised by the Palghat Mani Iyer Memorial Art Centre of Bangalore on 27th May 1984 in the Chowdiah Memorial Hall. The award comes from the K. Puttu Rao Memorial endowed by that munificent patron of arts, Sri K. K. Murthy, in memory of his father, the late K. Puttu Rao.

If a vote was taken today among main artists as to who is the most popular percussionist acceptable to all, Ramabhadran would be the unanimous choice. Reasons: First, his low profile and modesty; secondly, his playing refutes the common view of rhythm as palpable stresses and proves that rhythm can be a flowing interchange of tonal currents between the main performer and himself; thirdly, he shuns all and every kind of grandstand play. In an era of percussion playing that is increasingly formula-ridden, he shows a flattering predilection for the simple, melodic accompaniment that can steer any concert on a sparkling course. His light touch and nimble fingers can clothe the familiar strokes with a garb of striking, even original charm. The late Madurai Mani Iyer and M. D. Ramanathan used to speak of him as "Suswara Ramabhadran" and preferred him to others. When Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras conferred on him the title of "Sangeetha

Choodamany", Palghat Mani Iyer himself spoke highly of him.

Semmangudi Srivasa Iyer has consistently backed him from the forties and has helped him to attain the eminence that is Ramabhadran's today. He and Ramabhadran apparently worked on the hunch that the music world was probably tired of the stupendous feats of Palghat Mani Iyer and would welcome a more restrained, simpler style of playing. How right they have been proved is part of recent percussion history.

Congratulations, Ramabhadran!

Swati Tirunal Festival

Shorn of unnecessary glitter and hypocritical speeches, the "Swathi Tirunal Sangeethothsavam" organised by the Sree Swathi Thirunal Sangeetha Sabha, Kamdar Nagar, Madras in April last, was one of the best music festivals of its kind. The inauguration proceedings in which Sri C. Subramaniam, Sri Venkatasubbiah (Minister of State for Home Affairs), Dr. Balamuralikrishna and Sri K. Rajaram, (Speaker, Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly) took part were a model of efficient planning and good taste. Great restraint was shown by all speakers as to the need for such a festival—in which Swati Tirunal kritis and compositions alone were sung—at this point of time, as only a little previously a lot of dust had been kicked about Swati Thirunal. Both Sri K.J. Yesudoss and Sri R.G. Deva-
rajan, the Secretaries, were paragons of modesty and self-effacement.

(continued on Page 54)

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The programming, the day-to-day conduct of the festival (under most salubrious conditions in the air-conditioned auditorium of the Bharatiya Bhavan, Mylapore) and not least, the laudable idea of honouring that great savant, Dr. S. Ramanathan, with the title of "Swathi Thilakam" and a cash award of Rs. 3,000/- and similarly, Violin Vidwan Tiruvallore Subramanyan and mridangam Vidwan Sri Kuttalam Viswanatha Iyer, were very eloquent gestures. In purely

financial terms, it was an onerous venture since admission to all the concerts was free. The whole festival must have cost the organisers a packet. On top of that Sri Yesudoss also distributed a highly rewarding and charitable publication on Swati Thirunal replete with very informative and erudite articles and some kritis with swara-sahitya notation. All music lovers would wish that Sri Yesudoss's laudable and selfless efforts to bring about a Swati Thirunal renaissance are rewarded

Cultural Scene in Bombay

By

SULOCHANA RAJENDRAN

"I feel very small, I feel very humble", said Dr. Padma Subramaniam, the recipient of Sangeetha Natak Akademy and Nehru Awards, replying to the felicitations by a Committee of Hosts which included eminent artistes, art patrons, gurus and headed by Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde, Minister for Finance and Cultural Affairs at a glittering function on a March Sunday at the SIES Hall, Matunga.

Her concept of dance is 'as not a mere physical action but action that comes from an inner reaction'. Her training and performing experience speak of her dancing approach and intense dedication. And her rededication to the cause by donating the entire cash that went with the award to the Uttara Chidambara temple near Satara which would enshrine the 108 Karanas of Shiva Parvati was exemplary.

Innovation within Sampradaya

Commending her "innovative efforts whilst being within the Sampradaya the

Minister referred to her cultural pursuits which "brought together people of various castes, creeds and faith and promoted national integration" the crying need of the hour.

Professor T. V. Ramanujam listed "Lokadharmi" as her single great contribution to make the art of dance quite intelligible to a large section of the rasikas. whilst Soli Batliwala, the doyen among art patrons, praised Padma's efforts at bringing out what was oldest in our art Her creation of 'Sukha Lasya' merging music with movements is no insignificant one. Others who spoke included Dr. V. Subramaniam, former Finance Minister, Kathak exponent Sitara Devi, Guru Govindaraja Pillai of Rajarajeswari and Padma's senior student Jayashree Rajagopalan.

More Music Fare

Shanmukhananda Sabha made a bonanza to the members during April with

five vocal recitals, of which one was by a local celebrity, on the staff of the Sabha's music school and a Bharata Natyam recital. The Sabha's experiment with a one-day fare in place of twin-recitals by the same artiste was welcome.

Mani Krishnaswamy's Fine recital

It is the vitality of Mani Krishnaswamy's voice and vidwat disciplined in the distilled purity of tradition that sustain her music. Behind her Sadhaka is her thorough grooming in Kalakshetra and under eminent maestros like Mysore Vasudeva-char, Musiri Subramanya Iyer and T. K. Jayarama Iyer, to mention a few.

Mani's concert for the sabha during April was marked for its pleasing programming with an added attraction of accomplished accompanists, A. Kanyakumari (Violin) and Narendran (Mridangam) enriching the recital. Chakravakam, Sahana, Latangi, Kharaharapriya and Thodi alapanas towered in their traditional grandeur and graces. Todi Pallavi in Khanda Tripata was a refined treatment.

The concert had a refreshing whiff of melodic hues in Dikshitar's Chaturdasa Ragamalika which is rarely heard these days. And avoiding percussive combinations, she spun swaraprastaras with exquisite spontaneity that ideally suited her style of music. In sangatheer renditions, had she cast off a few outmoded variations, kritis like "Chakkani Rajamargamu" would certainly have had a more majestic stature.

Kanyakumari relished every bit of her participation adding her own melodic dimension without disturbing the main-

stream of music and Narendran provided scholarly percussion with uncanny ease and softness.

Prema Hariharan's Fluency

Another musician of the month was Prema Hariharan, a musician with a well trained voice that seldom flags. Not given to gimmicks but tradition-based, she displays a fluent style with a feel for the song. Yet if her recital fell short of expectations, it could be because the pauses and punctuations and programme planning so essential to a great performance were wanting. That she has the strength and stamina, the depth and delicacy and the vilambam and vishranthi were evident from the renditions of "Meenakshi Memudam" (Purvikalyani) and "Karthikeya Kangeya" (Todi). But the same could not be said of the alapanas, though they were elaborate and with a certain brilliance too. So much could she invest "Sriman Narayana" (Bauli) and "Narayana" (Suddha Dhanyasi) with emotive feeling. All the same she seemed unsure of the raga nuances in "Teratiyyaga Raadaa" (Gowlipanthu) and "Arulseyya Vendummayya" (Rasikapriya). A hurried Ragam Tanam Pallavi could as well have been skipped.

Kalyani Sarma's Aristry

Sandwiched between the two was Kalyani Sarma in a morning session at the Mini auditorium which did not draw much of a gathering. Yet with her immaculate 'paataanthara' and imaginative virtuosity, this sweet-voiced disciple of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer regaled the rasikas with choice selections, noteworthy among which were Saveri and Bhairavi.

No glamour, no guilt—but music that came from the heart with refined artistry.

Venkatesan Disappointing

Though heard after a long gap, Tiruppoonduruthi Venkatesan impressed as a musician with immense capacity. He has cultivated his voice in range and resonance and attuned his imagination to aesthetic flourishes. Singing with full-throated robustness and times in suppressed or muffled modulations, he essayed ragas elaborately and with refreshing originality. Todi was an instance and Pantuvarali, too, with its shadja-panchama varja prayogas scored well. The kritis "Needaya Raavalegaka" and "Shobha-name" were sincere efforts in interpretation. Yet a full integrated image was missing. Reason? A sort of anxiety to 'offload' too many ideas at a stretch and the gushing forth of phrases and designs in a deluge and without a definite form. And for many sangathees in niraval and swaraprastharas to almost all items beset a lack of sense of proportion.

Tyagarajan (violin) was melodious all through and young Swaminathan (mridangam) played with soft resonance and subtle anticipation.

Promising Mathangi

If her Bindumalini exposition and "Entamuddo" renditions were any indication, young Mathangi has a promising future. Her musical vision is bright, only it requires seasoning to make music enduring which comes of experience and sadhaka. Accompanying her on the violin Kalyani Panchapakesan projected herself

as a competent accompanist. And the concert had an experienced mridangist in Palani Kumar to provide 'pucca' percussion.

Brilliant Sujatha Srinivasan

Joyous, pulsating with rhythmic finery and an innate musical sense, Sujatha Srinivasan treated the rasikas to a Bharata Natya recital that was more than a pleasing entertainment.

Trained by Guru Swamimalai Rajaratnam, she exuded natural charm and subtle brilliance in her technique. There was warmth and expressive felicity in her abhinaya though the choreography generally had a liberal dose of Lokadharmi.

"Mohamana", the Bhairavi Varnam projected her nritta competence and abhinaya expressivity. Khandita surely was her forte ("Arivenayya"-Atana) though she carried herself equally with ease in intense bhakti ("Enneramum"-Devagandhari). No less poignant was her "Asaimugam" (Jonpuri). Here is a talented dancer whose progress will be worth watching, especially as her guru is not only an ace teacher but also an accomplished singer.

Seshagopalan Quietly Brilliant

T. V. Seshagopalan in his recent appearance at Shanmukhananda (May) delved deeply into classical depths and took to weighty interpretations with a relish in vilambam. He presented a couple of gems from Muthiah Bhagavatnar's treasure: "Shakti Ganapathim Bhajeham" (Nattai), "Vanchatovuna" (Karnarajanji), which established his deeper musical involvement and fluency in dew modes.

The alapana of Karnaranjani was soulful with a touch of Shivaranjani in the madhyam-varja designs in Arohana. Its true form could be understood only in kriti rendition and its grammar precisely in chittaswara which glided through madhyama in a vakra prayoga in the ascent. Splendid niraval and technicalised swaraprastharas lent his 'Saragunapalimpa' a heavy weight vidwat with a penchant for vinyasa. The Kedaragowla alapana was brilliant save for a couple of patches that strayed off the raga region.

Listening to his Manji Padam and the ragamalika one wished Seshagopalan specialised in this pace and poise. S. D. Sridhar's violin was complementary. It was Narendran (mridangam) who however compelled attention by his exquisite melody in accompanying as well as in the Thani.

Sundaresan's Calibre

A. Sundaresan's shastraic disposition has a distinct aura and his music is of a pure intellectual type requiring a rasika to be alert and attentive. His voice casts no melodic spell nor does he indulge in pyrotechnics. His Pantuvarali, Sriranjani and Todi in the June programme at Shanmukhananda left an impress of his scholarship and performing calibre. He was accompanied by Anantakrishnan (violin), the promising Ramesh—Rajagopal percussion duo.

Fine Violin Duo

To the hardboiled conservatives who are pessimistic about the future of Carnatic music, the team of youth the Sabha presented in June perhaps served as a rejoinder. Their unbridled enthusiasm border-

ing on flamboyance apart, the teenagers Ganesh and Kumaresh who are emerging fast on the instrumental front, flanked by another teenager Balaji, the kid-prodigy mridangist and seasoned Subramaniam (ghatam) displayed an enviable skill in a violin duet complementing and supplementing each other with uncanny synchrony. Formerly of Bombay now settled in Madras, the brothers had showed their mettle even as kids. Their rhythmic grit was admirable and their imagination vivid.

Their Chandrajyoti ('Baganayya'), Andolika ('Ragasudharasa'), Sahana ('Giripai') revealed their confidence and fluency. A little more concentration on the finer nuances of the ragas in their traditional format should help them curb their daring forays which do go awry and sound alien at times. The mini-maestro on the mridangam was a thrill to watch as he precisely anticipated tricky technical passages and negotiated with accuracy.

Viji Prakash Dances well

Viji Prakash, a product of Sri Rajarajeswari has been one of the few who have not strayed from mainstream Bharata Natyam nor diluted the tradition for a more attractive technique. In her latest 'Purandaropanishad', an anjali to the Sangita Pitamaha under the aegis of the Karnataka Sangha, Viji was seen in her dramatic element although she had not relaxed in her exacting and complicated nritta.

Besides the familiar keertanas of the bard such as 'Venkatachala Nilayam' (Sindhu Bhairavi), 'Mella Mellane' and 'Neene Anathabandu' (both regamalikas) she performed a varnam setting Saroja Anantaramayya's composition 'Purandaradasa' to the musical format of the Bhairavi Varnam 'Mohamana'. The early life of Srinivasa till he turned into the bard Purandaradasa was the theme highly dramatised by Viji with absorbing introspection.

It was the haunting melody of Prema Ramamurthy that added an aural dimension and depth to the visual interpretation.

44th Annual Bhagavatha Mela Dance-Drama Festival at Melattur

A week long 44th Annual Bhagavatha Mela Dance Drama Festival was held in Melattur from 9.6.84 to 16.6.84 in which a series of dance dramas of Venkatarama Sastriar like Prahalada, Harischandra Part I & Part II, Vipranarayana were staged in addition to Valli Kalyanam in Tamil.

The credit and kudos for having made known this popular, traditional art form to the world, which is highly classical in character both in music and dance, certainly belongs to the Late E. Krishna Iyer, an eminent dancer and art critic, the founder secretary of the Music Academy and the first nominated Secretary of the Tamilnadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram.

Languishing Art

This languishing traditional art is surviving only in Melattur with sporadic financial support from the General and State Sangeeta Nataka Akademies and the encouragement extended by a few art-minded people. The Tamilnadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram which has been realising the need and necessity of the documentation of this art for some time past, made arrangements this year for the video coverage of its first dance drama viz. Prahalada on an experimental basis. If this project comes out successful, the Manram has proposed not only to document other dance dramas but also the other dying traditional

folk art forms. The Government of Tamil nadu has also agreed in principle to allot a sizeable grant to the Manram for the act accomplishment of this project.

The very fact that these dance dramas had been witnessed by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Balwant Gargi, Dr. V. K. Narayana Menon, Smt. Rukmini Devi and a few other popular dancers and musicians apart from research scholars in India and foreign countries, bears ample testimony for the popularity and high technical aspects of the dance drama art.

Prahalada

Prahalada, the entire dance-drama running about for six hours was covered through the video. These dramas are noted for their technical excellence and classical content.

Kumar (younger brother of Kalaimamani Sri. S. Natarajan) as Hirayana stole the honours of the show. Sri Natarajan in the role of Leelavathi gave a convincing portrayal. Vocal musicians M/s Krishnamoorthi sarma, Srinivasa Raghavan, Veeraraghavan gave an excellent account of themselves with their pleasing and melodious music.

The festival came to an end on 16.6.84 with the Utsavam performed in reverence to Lord Anjanaya.

K. L. RAMAN

"Saraswathi"

It is gratifying to see "Saraswathi", a chamber music organisation, growing wings and taking off from the dull ground of arranging mere recitals. During the past one year, this active body has stretched its activities to cover lecture-demonstrations by artists high in the ladder of fame; encourage some budding talent by offering a platform to them; also provide opportunities for new compositions to be sung. But it capped all these efforts with celebrating on 28th May 1984, the illustrious Mysore Vasudevachar's 119th birth-day anniversary with great eclat. That fine eclectic musician, Prof. T. R. Subramaniam of the Delhi University, gave a rewarding performance consisting only of Vasudevachar's brilliantly variegated compositions—some of which as in the ragas Behag, Sama, etc. have the stamp of the Thyagaraja tradition in full bloom. As with a GBS play, one was not sure which to applaud more—the incisive, well-couched meaningful preface that TRS gave on the occasion or his evocative rendering of the kritis of Vasudevachar.

Souvenirs by Sabhas are ordinarily money-catching nets and often are not even available for public inspection. But the special publication of "Saraswathi" on Vasudevachar with original articles and reproduction of valuable articles was a superb contribution to the understanding of Vasudevachar's stature as a brilliant composer. It can be a

valuable addition to any musicologist's library—so rich in content and covers diverse facets of that composer. The public owe a lot of thanks to "Saraswathi's" Managing Committee and especially to Mr. N. V. Subramaniam (a Senior Railway Officer and a good violinist himself) for the way in which this lively chamber music club is being moulded and run.

Sri Swati Tirunal Sangeetha Sabha

Frequent references have been made in this journal to the excellent work done by this Sabha at Trivandrum, more recently to present Maharaja Swati Tirunal as a great music composer fit to be ranked with the Trinity. Both money and talent have been harnessed to good purpose in the preparation of the Sabha's Souvenir recently released in memory of the late Maharani Parvathi Bai, a very discriminating but staunch patron of Carnatic music (She too passed away on a Bahula Panchami day). Apart from old articles by the late Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Prof. R. Srinivasan and others, poignancy vests in an article entitled "Old gems with new lustre" by Dr. S. Venkitasubramanya Iyer, who died on 18-4-84, the day after the conclusion of the festival.

Dr. Iyer's eminence as an authority on Maharaja Swati Tirunal is universally conceded. (Elsewhere in these pages is an obituary note on this celebrity by his close friend and admirer, Sri T.S. Parthasarathy, Secretary of the Music Academy, Madras). Some anecdotes from the life

of Swati Tirunal culled from his *magnum opus* "Swati Tirunal and his Music" (1975) have been reproduced, enhancing the reader interest of the Souvenir. A discriminating albeit lengthy article on Amjad Ali Khan, the Sarod Ustad, by Sri S. Natarajan, an active member of the committee and a good pamphleteer,

and another hard-hitting article by the same author, denouncing the tirades against Swati Tirunal's musical achievements by some artistes outside Kerala, add spice to a Souvenir, very well produced and informative. Well done, Swati Tirunal Sabha, Trivandrum.

KSM.

Matunga Dramatic Society's Hits in Madras

Under the auspices of the Narada-Gana Sabha and the Krishna Gana Sabha, the Matunga Dramatic Society staged its well-known musico-religious plays "Thyagaraja" and "Purandaradasa" in Madras. Attendance at both Sabhas was really good, a tribute to the reputation of M.D.S. since in Madras, there is always a wide variety of plays staged every day, in which professionals participate and attract audiences who are out for sheer entertainment. The spacious stage of the Music Academy, Madras, was well utilised by the Bombay amateurs to provide rich backdrops against which their acting stood out. Mr. S. R. Kasturi's realistic make-up as Sri Tyagaraja—the tufted head, Tulasimala, the "chiplakattai" in the left hand etc meshed into a realistic portrayal of the Saint. All the famous Tyagaraja songs were rendered by him with bhava and fluent melody, a point that won frequent cheers from the knowledgable audience and from the great Manohar who was by my side. Jalpesan,

the Sishyas, esp. Kuppier and Thillai-sthanam Rama Iyengar (inimitable E.R.R. Chari in the role), were fine to watch. The Purandara play, again, with Kasturi in the leading role, was excellently produced and acted. In these days when the public taste is fed on mythological or historic plays or humorous social skits, Matunga Dramatic Society's troupe with their performances in Madras created a lot of nostalgia for dramas showing the lives of Saints.

x x x

It is a sad thing to record the death of Sri N. C. Sundararaman, an Hon. Secretary of the Sabha, under tragic circumstances. He was an enthusiastic and energetic worker for the Sabha, until an unkind fate snatched him away. His genial personality is much missed by the members of the Sabha and his colleagues on the Committee.

KSM.

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Letter from Bangalore

The 3rd Palghat Mani Iyer Memorial Lecture. Award-cum-Music Festival organised by the Palghat Mani Iyer Memorial Art Center started with a colourful function at Chowdiah Memoria Hall on Sunday, the 27th May 1984. Excerpts of recordings of Palghat Mani Iyer's mridangam were played as a prelude to the 5-day Memorial Festival. Prof. Ashok Damodar Ranade, Associate Director of Research in the American Institute of Indian Studies at the Deccan College, Pune, delivered the Palghat Mani Memorial Lecture, entitled "Musics & Rhythms".

Prof. Ranade explained the main basic categories of rhythm like Tribal, Travel, Folk, Classical & Popular, and said that chronological time was different from musical time. He explained in great length, the visual and mathematical aspects. Prof. Ranade also observed that the rhythmic structures in art were more flexible and differentiated from the clock time and art time.

In the interesting question-hour that followed, Bangalore K. Venkataram wondered whether mathematical precision was either required or advisable in art music. Gayathri Rajapur of Hawaii brought out the ethno-musical terminology. Sri B. V. K. Sastry spoke on Prof. Ashok Ranade, while A. Seetharam Avadhani proposed a vote of thanks. He announced a proposal for the creation of B. S. Shan-

karanarayanan Memorial Endowment created by B. S. Somanath and also thanked the latter for his assistance in organising this Memorial lecture.

The K. Puttu Rao Memorial Endowment Palghat Mani Award function followed. The Chief Justice of Karnataka, Hon'ble Justice V.S. Malimath, presented the Award to Vellore Ramabhadran. The Citation, a plaque containing a cash of Rs. 1,500/-, a Shawl, and Sandalwood garland were also presented to the Awardee. At the suggestion of musicians and the Sadas Vellore Ramabhadran was also awarded the title "Mridanga Kala Shiromani". The Chief Justice also released a Souvenir on this occasion giving details of previous annual festivals, the biographical sketches of the Awardee Vellore Ramabhadran, Prof. Asok D. Ranade, and the activities of the Art Centre during the previous years, besides several select photographs of the late Palghat Mani Iyer and other participants.

The Chief Justice in his remarks observed that the percussion artistes are not being given a fair deal and requested the Sabhas and organisations to recognise the contribution of other percussion artistes in instruments like Ghatam, Khanjari etc. Vidwan Lalgudi G. Jayaraman and Vidwan A. Subba Rao felicitated mridangam Ramabhadran on his

unique artistry for the past 4 decades. Several organisations and artistes garlanded Ramabhadran.

Sri B.V.K. Sastry introducing the Award and the Awardee recalled the services of the well known patron of music, the late K. Puttu Rao of Mysore and also complimented Sri K. K. Murthy for creating the K. Puttu Rao Memorial Endowment for the Annual Palghat Mani Award. Sri K. P. Nayar, President of the Art Center, welcomed the gathering and Bangalore K. Venkataram, Executive Director of the Art Center, gave a brief report.

Vellore Ramabhadran thanked the Art Center for the honour done to him. S. Ramachandran read the Award scroll and the Citation. Vidushi Suma Sudhindra compered the proceedings. Vidushi G. R. Jaya, Director of the Art Center, proposed the vote of thanks.

The Award function was followed by a highly delectable Violin duet by Lalgudi G. Jayaraman and his daughter Kum. J. Vijayalakshmi supported by Vellore Ramabhadran on Mridangam and K. S. Manjunath on Ghatam.

Concerts

The music festival side of the celebrations continued at the Rama Bhajana Sabha Hall, Malleswaram with an enthralling Flute Recital by Dr. N. Ramani supported by M. S. Govindaswamy on Violin, Tanjore Upendran on Mridangam, Sosale Seshagiri Das on Khanjari. Vidushi G. N. Nagamani Srinath of Mysore accompanied by Seshagiri Rao on Violin, A. V. Anand on Mridangam and Sukanya Ramagopal

on Ghatam gave a delectable vocal recital on the 3rd day. Veteran Vocalist Vidwan A. Subba Rao gave the penultimate concert in the company of A Veerabhadriah on Violin, Anantha Krishna Sharma on Mridangam and Bangalore K. Venkataram on Ghatam.

The valedictory function on the last day was preceded by a recital of the infrequent folk instrument Chowdike by Subbiah of Nelamangala, who was supported by Barike also. N. N. Kathavi, Director, Kannada & Culture, Govt. of Karnataka, in his valedictory address, observed that there are a number of percussion instruments spread all over the country, especially in Karnataka and that adequate encouragement should be given to percussion instruments by the organisations and especially the academic bodies. He praised the efforts of the Art Center in presenting several percussion instruments in an ensemble.

Earlier, A. Subba Rao recalled the services of the late Palghat Mani Iyer in enhancing the status of mridangam to what it is today. Bangalore K. Venkataram gave a brief report of the 5-day festival. A. Seetharam Avadani compered the proceedings and proposed the vote of thanks.

The Festival concluded with an enthralling session of 'LAYALAHARI' by the percussion ensemble of Sri Ayyanar College of Music, presented by Bangalore K. Venkataraman and directed by Anoor S. Ramakrishna. The team consisted of Mridangam, Tabla & Tabla Tarang, Gethu Vadya, Khanjari, Ghatam, Sammela and Chande, Konnakol, Dolu, Dolak, Morsing with a violin base. The entire festival was very well covered in the Press, and well received by the Artistes & Public. (FAC.)



KALPANA

Miss Martine Metayer, a French girl now in India under scholarship, belongs to a family of artistes. Her mother is a music teacher, while her father can play the violin. She herself learnt the piano and since 1976, has learnt to play the flute. After some coaching in Western classical dance, her interests turned to Bharatanatyam. This was sparked off when she attended a seminar on Bharatanatyam held in 1977, conducted by Malavika, a French dancer, disciple of the late Conjeevaram Ellappa Mudaliar. For 3 years, she had regular classes with Malavika and Shakuntala (a French dancer), also a disciple of Kalaimamani V. S. Muthuswami Pillai. After coming to India in 1980, she studied under Sri Pillai and took lessons. She also learnt Carnatic music under Smt. Kamakshi Kuppuswamy. The veteran Kalanidhi Narayanan (now on a demonstration tour of France by invitation) specially coached her in Abhinaya.

(continued on page 64)

“ப்ரோவ பாரமா - ரகுராம”

By

P. K. SRINIVASAN, B.Sc.,

முன்னுரை :-

‘ப்ரோவ பாரமா’ என்பது பஹுதாரி ராகத்தில் அமைக்கப்பட்ட ஸத்தகுரு ஸ்ரீத்யாகராஜரின் ஒரு சிறிய ரஸமான கீர்த்தனம். எல்லோராலும் சுலபமாக புரிந்து கொள்ளும்படி மிகவும் எளிய நடையில் ஒரே ஒரு சரணத்துடன் இக்கீர்த்தனம் பாடப் பட்டிருக்கிறது. ஆனால் நன்றாக ஆராய்ந்து பார்த்தால் வியக்கும்படியான ரஸமான பாவங்கள் அர்த்தப்புஷ்டியுடன் மறைந்துக்கிடப்பதை காணலாம். முதலில் கீர்த்தனத்தின் முழு உருவத்தை கவனிப்போம்.

கீர்த்தனம்

பல்லவி

ப்ரோவ பாரமா ரகுராம
புவனமெல்லவை நந்நொகனி

அனுபல்லவி

ஸ்ரீ வாஸுதேவ ! அண்டுகோடல்
குக்ஷிணியுந்தஸு கொலேதா — நன்னு

சரணம்

கலராம்புதிலோ தீயதோநமருலகை
யதிகாக கோபிகலகை
கொண்ட லெத்தலேதா
கருணாகர த்யாகராஜுனி

இதில் உள்ளடங்கிய கருத்துக்களை நன்றாக அனுபவிக்க வேண்டுமானால் இதை ஸ்வாமிகளுக்கும் ராமனுக்கும் நடக்கும் ஒரு சம்பாஷணையாக கல்பனை செய்துக் கொண்டு அலசிப் பார்க்கலாம்.

ஸம்பாஷணை

த்யாகராஜர் : ஹே ரகுராம ! உன்னுடைய தாஸன் நான். உன்னையே சரண் அடைந்திருக்கிறேன். இன்னும் என்னை காப்பாற்றாமல் ஏன் இருக்கிறாய்? என்னை

ரக்ஷிப்பது என்பது உனக்கு ஒரு கஷ்டமான காரியமா? ப்ரோவ பாரமா? ராம ராம !

ராமன் : ஹே த்யாகராஜா ! நான் உன்னை ரக்ஷிக்க வேண்டும் என்கிறேயே, உன்னிடம் என்ன தகுதி இருக்கிறது. எதைக் கொண்டு இப்படிச் சொல்கிறாய்?

த்யாகராஜர் : ஹே ப்ரபோ ! என்ன இப்படி ஒரு கேள்வி ! இந்த புவனம் எல்லாம் நீயே. எதைக் கண்டாலும் நான் ராமசந்த்ரானை உன்னையே தான் பார்க்கிறேன். புவனமெல்ல நீ வை. அப்படி இருக்க தினனான இந்த ஏழை ஒருவனை காப்பாற்றுவது உனக்கு ஒரு பாரமா—நன்னு ஒகனி ப்ரோவ பாரமா.

ராமன் : அது சரி, அதற்கு என்னிடம் வருவானேன். வேறு யாரிடமாவது விண்ணப்பித்துக் கொள்ளக் கூடாதா ?

த்யாகராஜர் : ஓ ராமா ! நீ வாஸுதேவன் அன்றோ ! அதனால் தான்.

ராமன் : அப்படி என்றால் அதில் என்ன விசேஷம் கண்டு விட்டாய் த்யாகராஜா ?

த்யாகராஜர் : இந்த அண்ட சராசரங்கள் அனைத்தையும் தன் வயிற்றில் வைத்துக் கொண்டு, ஞாலம் உண்டு உமிழும் ஏக மூர்த்தி நீயே தான் என்று அறிந்து உன்னை அடைகிறேன். அண்ட கோடல் குக்ஷிணியஞ்சுகொலேதா ? நன்னு ப்ரோவ பாரமா

ராமன் : த்யாகராஜா ! அண்ட சராசரங்களை என் உதரத்தில் வைத்து, ஆக்கல், அளித்தல், அழித்தல் செய்வது என் தொழில். அது என் லீலை. இவை ஒரு ஆதாரமாக உன்னைக் காப்பாற்றும் பொருட்டு எடுத்துக் காட்ட முடியாது.

த்யாகராஜர் : ராமா ! அது அப்படியே உன் லீலையாகவோ தொழிலாகவோ இருக்கட்டும். ஆனால் முன்பு மந்தர மலையை மத்தாகவும், வாஸுகியை கயிறாகவும் கொண்டு பாற்கடலை தேவர்களும் அஸுரர்களும் அமிர்தத்துக்காக கடையும் போது மலை சாய்ந்து புதைந்த ஸமயத்தில் கூர்மரூபம் எடுத்து உன் முதுகினிலே மந்தர கிரியை தேவர்களின் பிரார்த்தனைக்கிணங்கி தயை மேலிட்டு நீ தாங்கவில்லையா. அந்த மந்தர மலையை விட நான் பாரமாகி விட்டேனா? சற்று யோசித்துப்பார். கலசாம்புதிலோ தய தோனு அமருலகை கொண்டலெத்தலேதா !

ராமன். த்யாகய்யா ! அது தேவலோக விஷயம் என்பதை அறியாயோ ! நீ ஒரு மானிடன் தானே — பூலோகவாசி என்பதை மறந்து விடாதே.

த்யாகராஜர் : ராமா மந்தர மலையை தாங்கினது தேவலோக விஷயம் என்றால், கேவலம் இடைச்சேரியில் வளிக்கும் கோபஸ்த்ரீகளுக்காக இந்த பூமியிலேயே கோவர்தன கிரியை பல நாட்கள் இடைவிடாமல் இராப்பகலாக பாம ஸத்ரீ பாலர்களின் பொருட்டும் வாய்விட்டு பேசத் தெரியாத பிராணிகளின் பொருட்டும் ஒரு விரல் நுணியில் தாங்கினதை இங்கு ஞாபகப்படுத்துகிறேன். அவ்விதம் இருக்கும்போது, இந்த எளிய வனான த்யாகராஜனை காப்பாற்றுவது ஒரு கடினமான காரியமா? அதிகாக கோபிகலகை கொண்டலெத்தலேதா? கருணாகர ! த்யாகராஜுனி ப்ரோவ பாரமா ? ரகுராம !

* * *

இவ்விதமாக ஒரு தேர்ந்த வழக்கறிஞர் போல் த்யாகராஜர் தகுந்த ஆதாரங்களுடன் ராமனிடம் வாதாடும்போது, ராமச்சந்திரனுக்கு த்யாகராஜனுக்கு அருள்புரிவதை தவிர வேறு வழி ஒன்றும் உண்டோ ?

விசேஷக் கருத்துக்கள்:-

இது வரை சாதாரணமான கருத்தை சம்பாஷணை உருவத்தில் கண்டோம். இனி இக் கீர்த்தனத்தில் விசேஷமாக மறைந்துள்ள பாவங்களை பார்ப்போமாக. பல்லவியில் ராமன் என்றழைக்காமல் 'ரகுராமா' என்றும், அனுபல்லவியில் 'ஸ்ரீ வாஸுதேவ' என்றும் சரணத்தில் 'கருணாகர' என்றும் மூன்று ஸம்போதன பதங்களை மிகுந்த அர்த்த புஷ்டியுடன் உபயோகப்படுத்தியிருக்கும் கருத்துக்களை சற்று பார்ப்போமாக.

ரகுராம

இந்த பதத்தால் ராமன் உயர்ந்த குலத்தில் தோன்றினதை நினைவூட்டுகிறார். 'குலபிருதுனு ப்ரோசு கோம்மு ரம்மு' என்று சொன்னபடி அந்த குலத்தின் பெருமையை ராமன் காப்பாற்றுவதற்காக வாவது தன்னை ரக்ஷிக்க வேண்டும் என்கிறார். அது அவன் கடமையல்லவா! தவிரவும் ஸூர்யவம்ஸம் என்று சொல்லாமல் ரகுலத்தில் வந்த ராமன் என்பதில் மேலும் ஸ்வாரஸ்யம் உள்ளது. ஏனெனில் எல்லாவற்றையும் தானம் செய்த பின், கடைசியாக தன்னிடம் வந்து யாசகம் கேட்ட கௌத்ஸுகரை வெற்றுகையுடன் திருப்பி அனுப்ப இஷ்ட மில்லாதவனாக குபேரனுடன் போருக்கே கிளம்பினவன் அன்றோ ரகுமஹாராஜன். அப்படிப்பட்ட புகழ் வாய்ந்த ரகு குலத்தில் தானே ராமன் தோன்றினான். இதையே தான் நம் த்யாகராஜர் 'ராம ராம ராம சீதா ரமண' என்கிற உச்சேனி ராக கீர்த்தனத்தில் 'இல ரக்ஷண ஸேவ லேனி குலமா' என்று குறிப்பிடுவதை ஞாபகப்படுத்திக் கொள்ள வேண்டும். ஆகையால் ரகுராம என்ற சொல்லில் மறைந்து கிடைக்கும் இந்த பாவங்கள் அனைத்தும் நினைத்துப் பார்க்கலாம்.

ஸ்ரீ வாஸுதேவ

'ஸ்ரீ வாஸுதேவ' என்ற இந்த ஸம்போதன பதம், அடுத்து வரும் 'அண்டகோடல்

குக்ஷிணியுந்தஸுகோலேதா' என்பதின் பொருளை முன் கூட்டியே தெரிவிப்பது போல அமைந்திருக்கிறது. வாஸுதேவன் என்றபெயருக்கு ப்ரபஞ்சத்தை எல்லாம் மாயையினால் தன்னுள் மறைக்க கூடியவன் என்ற விசேஷப்பொருள். ஸஹஸ்ரநாமத்தில் 'பூதாவாஸோ வாஸு தேவ: ஸர்வாஸுநிலயேநல': என்ற இடத்தில் கூறப்பட்டிருக்கிறது. இங்கும் ஒரு ஸ்வாரஸ்யம் என்ன வென்றால் வாஸுதேவ என்று சொல்லாமல் ஸ்ரீவாஸு தேவ என்பதுதான். ஏனெனில் எல்லா புவனங்களையும் தன்னிடம் வைத்து ரக்ஷிக்க வேண்டுமானால், லோகமாதா வாகிய லக்ஷ்மியும் கூட இருந்தால்தான் முடியும். அதனால்தான் திவ்ய தம்பதி களை பிரிக்காமல், திருவுடன் கூடிய பெரு மான் - ஸ்ரீவாஸுதேவ என்று பதப்ர யோகம்.

பிராட்டியுடன் கூட இருக்கும்போது அனுக்ரஹசக்தியே அதிகம், நிக்ரஹசக்தி மிகவும் குறைவு என்பதை ஸ்ரீமத் ராமாயணத்தில் காகாஸுர வருத்தாந்தத் தில் நன்கு காணலாம். ராவணன் சீதையை அபஹரித்தானே தவிர, முறைதவறி தவருதலாக எதுவும் செய்யவில்லை. ஆனாலும் மஹா அபராதியான காகா ஸுரன் சிறு தண்டனையுடன் உயிர் தப்பினான் - ராவணனோ வதம் செய்யப் பட்டான். காரணம் - காகாசுரன் விஷயத்தில் பகவான் பக்கத்திலேயே ஜகன்மாதாவான சீதை இருந்தாள். அதனால்தான் 'வதார்ஹமபிகாகுஸ்த: க்ருபயா பர்யபாலயத்' என்றபடி. அன்னை யின் க்ருபையால், ரக்ஷிக்கப்பட்டான். இதை மனதில் வைத்துக்கொண்டுதான், இன்னமுதத் திருமகளை முன் வைத்து பின்னால் வாஸுதேவ என்று அழைக்கிறார் போலும்.

கருணாகர

'கருணாகர' என்ற பதத்தில் உள்ள விசேஷத்தை சற்று கவனிப்போம். மேலே

சொன்னபடி பலவிதமாக த்யாகராஜர் முறையிட்டுக்கொண்டும், பகவான் 'அண்டசராசரங்களை சுமப்பது' என் கடமை, மந்தரமலையை தாங்கினது தேவர் களுக்காக, கோவர்தன கிரியை எடுத்துத் தூக்கி குடையாக பிடித்தது என் இனத் தை சேர்ந்தவர்கள் என்பதற்காக—ஆனால் உன் விஷயம் வேறுவிதம், என்று சொல்லி சாக்குபோக்கு காண்பிக்க முடியாதபடி அமைந்திருக்கிறது கருணாகர என்ற இந்த ஸம்போதன பதம். ஹே ராம! உனக்கு கருணாகரன் என்ற பெயர் எப்படி வந்தது? கருணை செய்வதனால் அன்றோ அப்பெயர். அபராதிகள் தானே அந்த கருணைக்கு ஏற்ற பாத்திரம். உன் கருணைக்கு தகுதியுள்ள நான் ஒருவன் இருக்க நீ கருணை செய்யாவிடில் இந்த பிரதுக்கு பிரஸக்தியே கிடையாதல்லவா? ஆகையால் இந்த கருணாகரன் என்ற பிரது உனக்கு பொருந்த வேண்டும் என்றால் அதை நிலை நாட்டும் பொருட்டா வது நீ என்னை ஒரு பாரமாக கருதாமல் சிக்கிரம் காப்பாற்றுவாயாக என்று முடிக்கிறார். அதுவும் அந்த கருணைக்கு பாத்திரம் தான் என்பதை ஊர்ஜிதம் செய்வது போல் கருணாகர என்ற பதத்தை அடுத்து உடனே த்யாகராஜுனி என்கிறார்.

பஹுதாரி ராகத்தின் சிறப்பு

இவ்வளவும் போதாது என்று எல்லா வற்றிற்கும் சிகரம் வைத்தால் போல் இக் கீர்த்தனத்தை பஹுதாரி என்ற ராகத்தில் பாடியிருக்கிறார். இந்த பொருத்தமான சாதூர்யத்தை எப்படித் தான் வர்ணிக்க முடியும்? 'தாரி' என்றால் தரிப்பவன் தாங்குபவன் என்ற பொருள். உதாரண மாக சக்ரதாரி, என்றால் சக்கிரத்தை தரிப்பவன் என்று பொருள். இங்கு பஹு என்றால் அநேகம். ஆகவே பஹு தாரி என்றால் அநேக வஸ்துக்களை தாங்கு பவன் என்று பொருள். இதையே கீர்த்தனத்தில் அகில சராசரங்களையும் மலை களையும் தாங்குபவன் என்று ஸ்பஷ்டமாக கூறுகிறார். அப்படி பஹுதாரியாக

இருப்பவனுக்கு, அதில் அடங்கிய ஓர் அணு போன்ற இந்த த்யாகராஜன் ஒரு பாரமாக ஆக முடியுமா என்ற கருத்தை வலியுறுத்துவது போல இருக்கிறது பஹுதாரி என்ற இந்த கீர்த்தனத்தினுடைய ராகத்தின் பெயர்.

ஸ்வரஸ்தானமும் ஸாஹித்ய பாவமும்

ராகத்தின் பெயரும் ஸாஹித்யத்தின் கருத்தும் பொருத்தமாக அமைந்திருப்பதுடன் ஸ்வரஸ்தானங்கள், கோர்வைகள், ஸங்கதியின ஸஞ்சாரங்கள் இவைகளும் அதனதன் ஸாஹித்யத்தின் அர்த்த பாவத்தை அனுஷ்டித்து இருப்பதை த்யாகம் யரின் பல கீர்த்தனங்களில் காணலாம்.

மலையை இரண்டு தரம் தூக்கினதாக சொல்லப்பட்டிருக்கிறது. முதலில் பாற் கடல்கடையும் பொழுதும், இரண்டாவதாக மழையைத்தடுக்க குடைபோல் கிருஷ்ணாவதாரத்திலும்.— முதலாவது கீழ் மட்டத்திலும் இரண்டாவதில் தலைக்கு மேல் உயர்ந்த ஸ்தானத்திலும் தாங்கப் பட்டது. இந்த பாவத்தை அனுஸரித்தே 'கலசாம்புதிலோ தயதோனமருலகை' என்ற ஸாஹித்யத்தின் ஸ்வரங்கள் எல்லாம் பஞ்சமத்திற்கு கீழாகவும், கோபி கலகை என்பதன் ஸ்வரங்கள் பஞ்சமத்திற்கு மேலும் உள்ளன. மலை இரண்டு ஸமயங்களிலும் பகவானுக்கு மேலேயே இருப்பதால், 'கொண்டலெத்தலேதா' என்பதன் ஸ்வரங்கள் தாரஸ்தாயில் பாடப்படுவதால் அந்தந்த ஸாஹித்யங்களின் அர்த்த பாவத்தை அனுஸரித்தே அமைந்திருக்கின்றன என்பது நன்கு விளங்குகின்றது.

தாளம்

தாளம் என்பது காலத்தை குறிக்கும் சொல். பகவான் அண்ட சராசரங்களை தன் உதரத்தில் தாங்கி ஆக்கல்,

அளித்தல், அழித்தல் செய்வது. பக்தர் களை ரக்ஷிப்பது முதலியன இன்று நேற்று ஏற்பட்டதல்ல. ஆதி காலம் முதற் கொண்டே உள்ளது என்பதை நினைவு படுத்துவது போல், இந்த கீர்த்தனத்தை ஜம்பை, சாபு இவைகளில் அமைக்காமல் ஆதி தாளத்தில் அமைத்திருப்பது மேலும் ஒரு பொருத்தமுள்ள ரஸமான விஷயமாக தோன்றுகிறது.

ஒரு சிறு கீர்த்தனமானாலும் இவ்வளவு ரஸமான விஷயங்களுக்கு ரத்ன பெட்டி

போல் கீர்த்தனம் அமைக்கும் திறமை படைத்த ஸ்ரீ த்யாகராஜர் வாக்கேயகாரர் களில் தலைசிறந்து பிரகாசிக்கிறார் என்ப தற்கு மற்றச் சான்றுகளும் வேண்டுமோ? ராமனின் பரிபூர்ணமான அருளைப் பெற்ற ஸ்ரீ த்யாகபுரம்மத்திற்கு நாம் அஞ்சலி செய்வதை தவிர வேறு என்ன செய்ய முடியும். 'நன்னு ஓகனி ப்ரோவ பாரமா ரகுராமா' என்று நாமும் அவருடன் சேர்ந்து பாடுவோம்.

(continued from page 59)

Some months ago, Miss Martine, who has adopted the Indian name "Kalpana" gave a beautiful Bharathanatya recital in the hall of the Mylapore Fine Arts Club, under the auspices of the Alliance Francaise and Sankarabaranam. It was a truly classical programme studded with Pushpanjali, Kowthuvam, Alarippu, Jathiswaram, Varnam (in Vachaspati, Adi tala) and Abhinaya pieces: "Sogusuda" padam in Sahana, Jawali "Swarasundarangi" and Tillana in Kapi raga. The Nattuvangam was by her guru V. S. Muthuswami Pillai, vocal music by the melodic Madurai T. Sethuraman and mridangam in the capable hands of the veteran C. P. Arumugam.

A senior performer of Bharatham evaluated Kalpana's dance retical thus: She has very good laya, her lines are clean and perfect. Each "theermanam" was finished in full. Adavus were well done. Her abhinaya showed that she had grasped the songs and their meanings. The poses were all correct. As a child Krishna and as a Swadeenapatika, her portrayals were very good. It only shows that if God's gift is there and you work hard, foreign nationality is no handicap to Bharatanatyam skill." Kalpana intends to return to France late this year and teach this art. We wish her success.

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